

# WHO

## *style guide*



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION  
**GENEVA**  
2004

***WHO style guide***

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# 1. Introduction

## What is house style and what are its advantages?

House style – or the preferred spelling, punctuation, terminology and formatting to be used for the various information products published by an organization – offers three key advantages.

- **House style ensures consistency.** When authors use a consistent and established style, readers can focus on content and not be distracted by variations in spelling, punctuation, terminology and formatting. House style enables readers to obtain the information they are seeking with greater ease and speed.
- **House style contributes to a corporate image of “one WHO”.** In a large organization such as WHO, information is generated and distributed by various individuals and groups – all with their own styles and tones. By creating and adhering to a house style, a certain level of uniformity is achieved and, even though information is created and disseminated by several different groups, the information appears to be coming from a single, unified source.
- **House style streamlines and increases the efficiency of the writing and editing process.** By following a house style, authors do not have to clarify the preferred spelling, punctuation, terminology or formatting for every publication. Similarly, editors do not have to reinvent a rule for each different author and each publication.

## Who should follow WHO house style?

An established house style benefits readers, authors, editors and WHO. All staff members, as well as freelance writers and editors, who produce written information for WHO – such as letters, brochures, fact sheets, reports, books, executive summaries, web pages, etc. – should therefore become familiar with and follow WHO house style.

## About this guide

The *WHO style guide* outlines house style for use in all WHO-HQ printed and electronic materials. Although it is based on practice in WHO-HQ, it is hoped that it will also be of interest to regional offices. It provides a series of alphabetical lists setting out general English language rules, information on easily confused and troublesome words, and preferred spelling, punctuation, medical abbreviations and WHO-specific terms. Guidance on the use of non-discriminatory language is also included.

This guide is an updated and adapted version of the *WHO editorial style manual*, which is no longer in print. Unlike the latter manual, it is aimed at everyone involved

in the preparation of WHO information products, not only editors. Accordingly, some of the details relating to mathematics/statistics and scientific terminology have been left out, though these will be made available, together with other guidelines on writing and editing for WHO, on the WHO-HQ Intranet.

This guide and the various guidelines on writing and editing that have been or are being developed are intended to cover all of the essentials relating to WHO house style and the editing process. However, if you have a query that is not answered by any of these materials or are not working within WHO and are unable to access them, please contact IMD ([IMDQueries@who.int](mailto:IMDQueries@who.int)).

The WHO Manual and the WHO Office Handbook, available online from the WHO-HQ Intranet, also contain relevant information on the preparation of letters and reports of meetings.

## 2. WHO house style

### A word about spelling

Within WHO-HQ, British rather than American spelling is normally used. The general rule is to follow the spelling listed in the latest edition of *The concise Oxford dictionary*. There are, however, a number of exceptions.

For more information on WHO house style for spelling of words commonly used in WHO information products, see the “Spelling” entry in this section and the WHO spelling list (see section 5).

The following alphabetical list provides some general guidelines on rules to be followed in the preparation of material for WHO publications.

### Abbreviations

The purpose of abbreviations is to save space in figures and tables or when the same word or phrase occurs many times in an article.

Abbreviations may be formed in any one of the following ways:

- By omitting the end of a word, which should be replaced by a full stop:  
Jan., Co.
- By suppressing the middle of a word:  
Dr, Mr (a full stop is not usually required).
- By combining the initial letters of the main words, or components of words, in expressions such as titles of organizations or certain medical terms:  
WHO (World Health Organization)  
CNS (central nervous system)  
DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane).

In abbreviations of this type, capitals should be used without full stops.

Some general rules regarding abbreviations are provided below.

- All abbreviations should be defined and spelt out the first time they are used, unless likely to be familiar to readers. A few abbreviations, such as e.g., i.e., etc., are so widely used that the complete words are almost never given.

The World Health Organization (WHO) was established on 7 April 1948.

- Keep the number of abbreviations to a minimum and avoid using any that may be confusing.
- If the text includes many abbreviations, a separate list of the abbreviations and their definitions should be provided.
- Where an abbreviation requiring a full stop falls at the end of a sentence, a second full stop is not needed.

A list of commonly used abbreviations is given below. Section 7 provides further information on abbreviations, including abbreviations used in the medical sciences, abbreviations of international and other organizations, and abbreviations for use in addresses.

### *Abbreviations commonly used in WHO publications*

ad lib	<i>ad libitum</i> ; as desired
& (to be used between authors' names in bibliographic references)	and
cont.	continued
ed. (to be used in bibliographic references)	edition
ed., eds (to be used in bibliographic references)	editor(s)
e.g.	for example
et al. (to be used in bibliographic references)	<i>et alii</i> ; and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> ; and so on
Fig., Figs (to be used to refer to particular figures in text and in figure captions)	Figure(s)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> ; that is
no., nos, No., Nos	number(s)
p., pp.	page(s)
per cent, %	<i>per centum</i> ; per hundred
rev.	revised, revision
sp., spp.	species (singular and plural)
Vol. (to be used in bibliographic references)	volume(s)

### **Alphabetical order**

In lists of names and addresses and in indexes and alphabetical reference lists, etc. the following general rules apply.

- When the first component of a family name is a particle, such as *al-*, *de*, *Le*, *Van* or *von*, the first letter of the particle should normally be used for alphabetizing, unless established usage or another specific reason dictates otherwise.
- Names beginning with the prefix “Mac” or “Mc” should be arranged as if the letter “a” were present in all cases.

- When Chinese personal names are written in the traditional way – meaning the single-syllable family name is placed first – the family name should be used for alphabetizing. For example, Dr Hu Ching-Li should be listed under *H*.
- Any listing of Member States should be presented in alphabetical order, unless there is a good reason to present them in another order (e.g. if you want to rank countries in order of gross national product or according to infant mortality rates). The list provided in section 8 is presented in alphabetical order.
- In the alphabetization of chemical names, Greek letters and italicized prefixes should be ignored.

### Anatomy

In general, the anglicized versions of Latin anatomical terms should be used, as found in the standard medical dictionaries. If, for a specific reason, Latin terms are preferred in a given context, they should not be italicized.

### Bibliographies

A bibliography is a list of references relevant to the subject matter of a publication that is recommended for further reading; these are references not cited in the publication. The references within a bibliography should be presented alphabetically, according to the names of the authors. A bibliography may be subdivided into sections by subject, in which case items should be presented alphabetically within each section.

Authors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy, completeness and correct presentation of all material in bibliographies. An editor may check any details that are obviously wrong or that appear doubtful, but the primary responsibility rests with the author.

For more information on how to format each entry in a bibliography, see **References**.

### Capitalization

Use of initial capital letters for words should be limited and consistent throughout a publication.

- Proper names, titles and institutions should have an initial capital, but descriptive appellations should not, unless the result would appear odd or confusing:
  - the French Government *but* a government leader
  - the New Zealand Ministry of Health *but* she reviewed the policies and programmes of various ministries of health
  - the Department of the Environment *but* government departments.
- The use of trade names should be avoided if possible, but if they are included, they should be identified by an initial capital letter.
- Generic names in the Linnaean binomial nomenclature, such as *Trypanosoma* spp. and *Schistosoma* spp., take an initial capital letter, but the English names of such organisms, trypanosome and schistosome, do not.

- The following words and expressions used frequently within WHO publications normally require capitalization:

Associate Member (of WHO)  
Constitution (of WHO)  
(Eighth) General Programme of Work  
Fifty-... World Health Assembly  
Member (country)  
Member State  
officials (specific): President, Vice-President, Chairman, Rapporteur, Secretary  
the Organization (WHO)  
Region (of WHO) (cap. in specific reference, e.g. “in the European Region”)  
Regional Committee (specific)  
Regional Director(s) (specific)  
Regional Office (specific) *but* regional offices (pl.)  
Secretariat (WHO).

For information on capitalization in headings, see **Headings**.

### **Chemical names**

Chemical names should follow the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) rules, as interpreted by the American Chemical Society. Some exceptions and spellings to note are:

sulfur *instead of* sulphur  
aluminium *instead of* aluminum  
caesium *instead of* cesium.

Chemical names should be spelt out in text unless the symbolic formula is graphically useful.

### **Contractions**

Contractions should be avoided in WHO information products:

do not *instead of* don't  
is not *instead of* isn't  
it is *instead of* it's.

### **Copyright and the WHO copyright notice**

All printed, electronic and audiovisual materials issued by WHO should bear a copyright notice, including the standard copyright line:

© World Health Organization [year]

WHO has standard copyright notices and disclaimers for inclusion in printed and electronic materials, which are available on the WHO-HQ Intranet. A copyright notice also appears on the WHO web site, accessible from the WHO home page. This

notice is not strictly necessary in all countries, but it is always useful in establishing copyright and avoiding copyright infringement.

Information on copyright, including protection of WHO's copyright, joint copyright, transferring copyright and using copyright material owned by someone else, is available on the WHO-HQ Intranet.

## Currency

- When two or more countries use the same name for their currencies, the appropriate distinguishing adjective should be used at first mention, or throughout the text if confusion is possible:

100 US dollars, 200 Canadian dollars  
100 Irish pounds, 300 pounds sterling.

- When the monetary unit is written in full, it should follow the number for the amount, as in the examples above, but when the abbreviation is used, it should always precede the amount. Where a symbol is used to represent the monetary unit, there should be no space between the symbol and the amount:

€200  
£19.95.

- Where the abbreviation is a letter or letters or a combination of letter(s) and symbol, there should be one space between the abbreviation and the amount:

US\$ 6000.

- WHO's three-letter currency codes (CHF, GBP, USD, etc.) are for internal use only and should not appear in publications.
- Lists of the official basic units of currency and the appropriate currency abbreviations are given in the following publications.

*Names of countries and their capital cities, including adjectives of nationality and currency units.* Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1993 (FAO Terminology Bulletin, no. 20/rev. 11).

Turner B, ed. *The statesman's yearbook 2004: the politics, cultures and economies of the world*, 140th ed. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.<sup>1</sup>

## Dates

Write dates in the following order, with no commas: day, month (spell out in full), year. Avoid beginning a sentence with a year.

The meeting was held on 12 September 1999.

Nineteen ninety-nine was the first year in which data on participants were gathered.

*becomes*

Data on participants were first gathered in 1999.

---

<sup>1</sup> Revised annually.

## **Decades**

Use figures rather than words for decades. Note that there is no apostrophe before the “s”.

The first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in the eighties [or the '80s].

*becomes*

The first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in the 1980s.

## **Disclaimers**

Information on disclaimers for printed and electronic materials is available on the WHO-HQ Intranet.

## **Diseases**

As far as possible, the International Nomenclature of Diseases (IND) (several volumes published by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) or CIOMS/WHO; see section 10) should be followed for disease names and their spelling; otherwise, standard medical dictionaries, such as those listed below, should be consulted. Note that British, rather than American, spellings should be used (e.g. “haemoglobin” *not* “hemoglobin”; see section 5).

*Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary*, 29th ed. Philadelphia, PA, Saunders, 2000.

*Stedman's medical dictionary*, 26th ed. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins, 1995.

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is a statistical classification and is not intended to be a reference for nomenclature.

## **Drugs and pesticides**

For pharmaceuticals, the International Nonproprietary Names (INN) established by WHO should be used. For pesticides, the common names adopted by the International Organization for Standardization (see International Standard ISO 1750:1981, and subsequent addenda and amendments) should be used. When no internationally approved name exists, an approved national name may be used. Proprietary names should be avoided whenever possible.

To request access to the latest INN list, contact the administrator at <http://mednet.who.int>.

## **Emblem and logo**

Within WHO, *emblem* refers to the United Nations symbol surmounted by the Aesculapian staff and serpent, as recorded in World Health Assembly resolution WHA1.133. The term *logo* refers to WHO programme logos.

For more information on WHO policies regarding the use of the WHO emblem and WHO programme and project logos, see Cluster Notes 2002/17 and 2002/15 (available on the WHO-HQ Intranet) or contact [IMDQueries@who.int](mailto:IMDQueries@who.int).

## Figures

Figures should be kept as simple as possible, with brief titles. Figures that contain too much information can confuse rather than clarify issues. Graphs should have their axes clearly labelled with the relevant units of measurement included in parentheses. Be aware that for photographs and drawings of human subjects, there are ethical issues involved, including discrimination on the basis of sex, minority, racial groupings and privacy.

- Figures should be clearly labelled, using the same font and style of heading as that used for tables (see **Tables**). The abbreviation “Fig.” may be used in the figure title:

Fig. 3

### **Design of a case-control study**

- The abbreviation “Fig.” may also be used in the text to refer to a specific figure; however, it should not be used when referring to a generic figure.

This trend is illustrated in Fig. 1.

The figure below illustrates this trend.

- Figures must agree with, and be referred to in, the body of the text and should appear in the order in which they are cited.
- If figures are reduced for publication purposes, care should be taken to ensure that any text and labels are legible in the final version.
- For footnotes to figures, see **Tables**.
- As in the case of tables, if a figure is reproduced from material previously published by another publisher, permission must be obtained from the author(s) and/or publisher(s) and a footnote acknowledging the source included (see “Copyright and permissions” on the WHO-HQ Intranet).

## Footnotes

Footnotes are used to provide additional details, such as references or explanations of unfamiliar terms, that would disrupt continuity if included in the body of the text. They should be kept to a minimum. As a general rule, very short notes, such as cross-references to other sections or pages in the same work, should be given in parentheses in the text. For footnotes to tables, see **Tables**.

- Place footnotes at the bottom of the page on which the footnote reference appears.
- Use superscript Arabic numerals to identify footnotes. When this may cause confusion, such as in scientific text containing mathematical exponents, lower-case letters should be used. Asterisks and other special typographical signs are used only rarely, such as in lists of participants in reports of WHO expert groups.
- Number footnotes to the text consecutively, beginning with “1”, throughout each page of a book or journal article. If two or more passages appearing on the same page require the same footnote, the footnote should appear only once and the reference mark should be repeated. Note that the footnote numbering should restart on each page.

- Place the reference mark after any punctuation that immediately follows the word, part of a sentence, or sentence to which the footnote refers. The reference mark should be placed after the closing parenthesis if it refers to the text within the parentheses; otherwise, it should be placed immediately after the word or phrase to which it refers.

ICD-10 provides a diagnosis of diseases, disorders or other health conditions, and this information is enriched by the additional information given by ICF on functioning.<sup>1</sup>

ICD-10 and ICF are therefore complementary,<sup>2</sup> and users are encouraged to utilize these two members of the WHO family of international classifications together.

ICD-10 (which is enriched by the additional information given by ICF on functioning)<sup>1</sup> provides a diagnosis of diseases, disorders or other health conditions.

Researchers stated that “ICD-10 and ICF are therefore complementary, and users are encouraged to utilize these two members of the WHO family of international classifications together”<sup>1</sup>.

### **Fractions, non-decimal**

Write non-decimal fractions in words, not figures, and do not hyphenate.

Two thirds of the patients exhibited symptoms of the disease.

Four fifths of the participants were female.

### **Geographical designations and regions**

*Merriam-Webster’s geographical dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Springfield, MA, Merriam-Webster, 1997) can be used as a guide to the spelling of common geographical entities. In general, WHO follows United Nations practice with respect to geographical terminology. However, situations may change, making it difficult to keep up with the latest developments. If you have any doubts on the acceptability of a particular name or designation or the status of a country with respect to membership of WHO, you should check with the Office of the Legal Counsel (LEG).

For further information on geographical designations, see **Member States** and **Structure of WHO**.

### **Country, state, territory**

All WHO publications carry a standard disclaimer regarding the designation of countries, territories, cities, areas and their authorities, and the delimitation of frontiers (available on the WHO-HQ Intranet). The term “country” is often construed as meaning a sovereign state. Territories not responsible for their international relations, such as Gibraltar, should not be included in listings bearing the title “country”. Normally, the heading “country or area” can be used to cover such cases.

If it is necessary to refer to the status of self-governing territories, they should be referred to as “territories that are not responsible for the conduct of their international relations”; the words “colony” and “colonial” should not be used.

### Directions

Use initial capitals for *North*, *South*, *East* and *West* when they are part of a proper name or if they refer to a formal geographical area. Do not use initial capitals for these terms when they are used to refer to a direction or a general geographical area.

The fourth largest continent is South America.

The roads to the north and to the south are seriously damaged.

The programme was to be launched in eastern Europe.

Compass points should be abbreviated in indications of latitude and longitude and in all tables and figures. Capital letters should be placed immediately after each other without the interposition of full stops or spaces:

7° 10'N to 0° 40'S, SSE.

### Geographical regions

For geographical regions, avoid terms such as “the western world”, which imply that everything is viewed from the standpoint of western Europe. Avoid using “westernized” to mean “developed” or “industrialized”. There is also an increasing tendency for the terms “North” and “South” to be used to imply a particular stage of development. Usage of such terms should be restricted to a geographical context only. Similarly, refer to “developing countries” rather than to “underdeveloped countries” or “the Third World”.

### Maps

All maps used in WHO publications should follow United Nations practice with respect to place names and drawing of boundaries. Maps should be cleared with LEG (see Cluster Note 2001/4) unless they have been prepared by Graphics (GRA) or unless they are based entirely on either the template map of the world prepared by the Department of Evidence for Health Policy (GPE) (available at [http://snow.who.int/whosis\\_stage/menu.cfm?path=whosis,gis&language=english](http://snow.who.int/whosis_stage/menu.cfm?path=whosis,gis&language=english)) or maps downloaded from the web site of the United Nations Cartographic Section (<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf>). If maps are downloaded from the United Nations Cartographic Section, however, permission will need to be obtained from this Section to reproduce them.

### Governing bodies of WHO

WHO's highest decision-making body is the World Health Assembly. Avoid the abbreviation WHA, except in references to World Health Assembly resolutions (e.g. “... in resolution WHA55.3”); outside audiences often think WHA is a misspelling of WHO. Note that the short name is “Health Assembly”, not “Assembly”. References to a specific Health Assembly should include the word “World” and the number of the Health Assembly, for example “the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly”.

The Executive Board of WHO, which has the dual role of making proposals to the Health Assembly and ensuring that the decisions of previous Health Assemblies are put into effect, is made up of members designated by Member States. Until 1998, members served on the Executive Board in a personal capacity, but now represent the Member States who designate them.

The Health Assembly is made up of *delegates* of Member States. The regional committees are composed of *representatives* of Member States and, if applicable, Associate Members.

It is important not to confuse the terms *delegates* and *representatives* since they reflect the status of the views these people express and of the decisions they make. It is also important not to confuse the terms *members* and *Members*, the latter meaning the Member States themselves.

When referring to the “governing bodies” of WHO, use lower-case letters. Use initial capitals when referring to the External Relations and Governing Bodies (EGB) cluster of the Organization.

Further information on WHO’s governing bodies can be found on the WHO-HQ Intranet. See also **Structure of WHO**.

## **Headings**

Headings ensure the consistency of and provide clarity in a publication by indicating the hierarchy and structure. When preparing a manuscript for publication, keep a record of the font type and size used for each level of heading.

- Where possible, limit the number of heading levels to three.
- Numbered headings are obligatory in the WHO Technical Report Series and may be used in other publications if warranted (for example, where there is extensive cross-referencing to the various sections). In the former case, the heading levels are as follows:

### 3. **Specific food additives**

#### 3.1 **Safety evaluations**

##### 3.1.1 **Emulsifiers**

- Use initial capital letters for the first word of the heading and for any of the exceptions noted under “Capitalization”.
- No full point is required for headings or chapter titles.

## **Italics**

Use italics sparingly to indicate emphasis. Italics are used in texts, reference lists and bibliographies in WHO publications for:

the titles of books, journals and documents

foreign words and expressions not in common use (including Latin genera and species)

variables in mathematical expressions

certain letters, prefixes and terms in scientific use.

Italics should not be used for foreign words and expressions that are in common use, such as *ex officio*, *fait accompli*, *in situ* and *in vitro* (see section 5).

## **Lists**

Lists, which draw the reader's eye to particularly important text, should be used sparingly to maximize their impact. To increase clarity and add emphasis, items in a list should be set apart by bullets. Dashes or "em rules" may also be used for short items or incomplete sentences (Formats A and B below). If the list highlights sequential steps, numbers should be used. It is also easier to refer to a number if one of the items listed is mentioned in the text.

The formatting of a list depends on the nature of the items. Examples of the three most frequently used formats are provided below.

### **Format A**

If each item comprises less than a complete sentence, the list is actually a single large sentence. In this case, use a colon to start the list, begin each bulleted item with a lower-case letter, and place a full stop at the end of the last item.

The various components of the microscope can be classified into four systems:

- the support system
- the magnification system
- the illumination system
- the adjustment system.

### **Format B**

If some of the bulleted items are longer than one line, end each bulleted item with a semicolon and place a full stop at the end of the final bulleted item.

The disadvantages of wide-mesh mosquito nets are:

- the nets offer no protection once the insecticide has lost its activity;
- wide-mesh nets are more easily torn than standard nets;
- they are not yet commercially available (but can be made out of curtain or other wide-mesh netting material).

### **Format C**

If the items in the list comprise one or more complete sentences, each sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop.

Fuerstein has written a seminal work on participatory evaluation, and suggests that a participatory evaluation in the development context include certain steps.

- All those involved in a programme decide jointly to use a participatory approach. They decide exactly what the objectives of the evaluation are. This can turn out to be far harder than originally thought.
- When agreement is reached, a small group of coordinators is elected to plan and organize the details.
- The best methods for attaining the objectives are chosen. The capabilities of the people involved and the available time and other resources will influence this choice.

## **Medical abbreviations**

A list of common medical abbreviations is provided in section 7. More extensive lists are available in the following publications.

Fuller Delong M. *Medical acronyms, eponyms & abbreviations*, 4th ed. Los Angeles, CA, Health Information Press, 2002.

Ritter RM, ed. *The Oxford dictionary for writers and editors*, 2nd ed. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

## **Member States**

A list of Member States and Associate Members of WHO (valid as of 22 July 2003) is provided in section 8. The list includes the short country name, the full name, the capital city, the relevant adjective and advice about how to refer to the people of each country. Information on how to refer to Member States may also be found on the Internet at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf>.

Information on the regional distribution of Member States and Associate Members may be found on the WHO-HQ Intranet. See also **Structure of WHO**, which provides information on how to refer to the different WHO regions.

## **General information**

- Any listing of Member States should be presented in alphabetical order, unless there is a good reason to present them in another order (e.g. if you want to rank countries in order of gross national product or according to infant mortality rates).
- The term “Member States” is written with initial capital letters and “Member countries” with an initial capital letter only for the word Member. These two terms are synonymous. When the term “State” is used to refer to Member States, it should be capitalized.
- Maps should be cleared with LEG (see Cluster Note 2001/4) unless they have been prepared by GRA or unless they are based entirely on either the template map of the world prepared by GPE (available at [http://snow.who.int/whosis\\_stage/menu.cfm?path=whosis.gis&language=english](http://snow.who.int/whosis_stage/menu.cfm?path=whosis.gis&language=english)) or maps downloaded from the web site of the United Nations Cartographic Section (<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/geoname.pdf>). See also **Geographical designations and regions**.
- It is not acceptable to refer simply to Laos, Libya, Syria or Tanzania. These countries must be referred to as “the Lao People’s Democratic Republic”, “the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya”, “the Syrian Arab Republic” and “the United Republic of Tanzania”, respectively.
- It is not acceptable to use the term “the former USSR”. This area should be referred to as “the former Soviet Union”.
- It is not necessary to include the definite article preceding the names of certain Member States where space is limited, in a table or index for instance. However, the definite article should be included where those names appear in text, including

addresses (e.g. “Amsterdam, the Netherlands”), or where it forms part of the official name (e.g. “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”).

- If you are in doubt about the acceptability of a particular name or designation or the status of a country or area, check with LEG.

*Information relating to the Member States of specific WHO regions  
(listed in alphabetical order)*

**WHO African Region**

- Congo: this is the short form for the Republic of the Congo, which has Brazzaville as its capital city. It should not be confused with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (no short form), which has Kinshasa as its capital.
- Côte d’Ivoire: this should always be referred to as such, and not translated into English.

**WHO Region of the Americas**

- United States of America: once the full name has been used or where space is limited (as in a table or index for instance), the shorter forms “the United States” or “the USA” may be used. Note that the abbreviation “US” should not be used, except when referring to the US dollar (see **Currency**).
- Venezuela: in February 2000, the full name was changed to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The short form of the name remains “Venezuela”.

**WHO South-East Asia Region**

- Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: the designation “North Korea” should not be used and the term “Korea” should never be used alone (for the Republic of Korea, see the WHO Western Pacific Region).
- Timor-Leste: the State formerly known as “East Timor” was admitted to membership in WHO on 27 September 2002 with the full name “Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste” and the short name “Timor-Leste”.

**WHO European Region**

- Germany: it is not acceptable to refer to the “former Federal Republic of Germany”. Expressions such as “the Federal Republic of Germany before reunification” and “the former German Democratic Republic” may be useful for clarifying the geographical area to which health statistics predating October 1990 apply.
- Israel: it is not acceptable to refer to either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. WHO follows United Nations practice and omits references to the capital of Israel or leaves a blank space.
- Serbia and Montenegro: on 4 February 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia changed its name to “Serbia and Montenegro” (short form and full name).
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: do not use “Macedonia” or “Republic of Macedonia”. In alphabetical lists and tables, this country should be listed under “t” rather than “f”.

- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: this area should be referred to by its full name on title pages, in signatures and in recording nominations, elections and votes. Once the full name has been mentioned or where space is limited (as in a table or index for instance), the form “the United Kingdom” may be used. Neither form should be used in addresses; the specific country should be mentioned instead (e.g. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales). Note that the abbreviation “UK” should not be used.

### **WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region**

- Iran (Islamic Republic of): this form is acceptable only for alphabetical lists or name-plates; for other purposes the term “the Islamic Republic of Iran” should be used.
- Palestine: the term Palestine is used in WHO to designate the Palestine Liberation Organization as an entity enjoying observer status in WHO. The use of the expression “occupied Palestinian territory” is acceptable in reports prepared by the Secretariat in response to requests contained in resolutions of WHO governing bodies using the same expression. Otherwise, the expression “West Bank and Gaza Strip” should be used to designate the territory in question. To refer to the parts of the territory in question under the direct control of the Palestinian Authority (e.g. the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area), the expression “Palestinian Self-Rule Areas” can be used in the first instance, after which it is acceptable to use the abbreviation “PSRA”.

### **WHO Western Pacific Region**

- China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR): do not use “Hong Kong”. This area should be referred to by its full name in the first instance, after which it is acceptable to use “Hong Kong SAR”. If data for this area are to be presented separately from those concerning China in a list or table they should be given immediately following the data for China, with the identification “China, Hong Kong SAR”.
- China, Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR): do not use “Macao”. This area should be referred to by its full name in the first instance, after which it is acceptable to use “Macao SAR”. If data for this area are to be presented separately from those concerning China in a list or table they should be given immediately following the data for China, with the identification “China, Macao SAR”.
- China, Province of Taiwan: do not use “Taiwan”. This area is considered, within the United Nations system, as a province of China, under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Government in Beijing. If it is mentioned, it should be referred to as “China (Province of Taiwan)” or as “Taiwan, China”. If data for this area are to be presented separately from those concerning China in a list or table they should be given immediately following the data for China. It is advisable to consult LEG before mentioning Taiwan or including information or data concerning this area in WHO documents and publications, including those accessible online.
- Micronesia (Federated States of): this form is acceptable only for alphabetical lists or name-plates; for other purposes the term “the Federated States of Micronesia” should be used.

- Republic of Korea: the designation “South Korea” should not be used and the term “Korea” should never be used alone (for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, see WHO South-East Asia Region).
- Viet Nam: not Vietnam.

### Months

- Spell out the names of months in full when they appear in text.

The study was conducted in January 2001.

- If necessary, months may be abbreviated in tables.

Jan.  
Feb.  
Mar.  
Apr.  
May  
Jun.  
Jul.  
Aug.  
Sept.  
Oct.  
Nov.  
Dec.

### Non-decimal fractions

See **Fractions, non-decimal**.

### Numbers

- In text, the general rule is to spell out whole numbers that are less than 10 and to use figures for 10 or more.

The physician saw nine patients on Tuesday and six on Wednesday.

In the past few months, 17 institutional lists of essential drugs have been updated.

- Figures should always be used in specific numerical contexts, such as with unit symbols and abbreviations; the figure should be separated from the unit by a non-breaking space.

The health clinic was 3 km from the village.

The budget for the programme was US\$ 3 billion.

Samples were collected on day 3 of the study.

For further information, see Chapter 5.

- If a sentence begins with a number, spell it out or rewrite the sentence.

Fifteen of the 75 samples tested positive.

*becomes*

Of the 75 samples tested, 15 were positive.

- In a series of numbers, use figures for every item of the list.

The results of the study will be included in Chapters 2, 5 and 12.

A total of 19 patients were treated with drug A and 7 with drug B.

- A four-digit number is not normally split unless it appears in a column of a table that contains larger numbers when a split is used to maintain alignment. When a number has more than four digits, it should be split by means of a non-breaking space, not a comma, after every three digits to the left or right of the decimal point:

10 000 or 0.234 56.

### **Organizations**

When using “the Organization” as a synonym for WHO, use an initial capital letter.

A list of abbreviations of international and other organizations frequently encountered in WHO publications is included in section 7.

### **Percentages**

Use numbers and the percentage symbol to express percentages, not per cent. There should be no space between the figure and the symbol.

The incidence rate increased by 20% between 1994 and 1997.

### **Politically sensitive material**

As a general rule, any text that describes the workings of, or criticizes, a particular government or national health system should have been cleared by the government concerned; this is the responsibility of the technical department. Brief statements of this nature presented as examples from particular countries or as attributed views from other publications are generally acceptable, but the possibility of causing embarrassment to governments should always be borne in mind. LEG should be consulted if there is any doubt regarding the acceptability of any statement of this nature.

See also **Geographical designations and regions** and **Member States**.

### **Punctuation**

Punctuation eases reading and clarifies meaning. Well-written text should require only the minimum of punctuation. If a great deal of punctuation is required for clarification, the text should be revised. Punctuation marks should be printed in the same style and type font as the text in which they appear.

#### **Apostrophe (')**

Apostrophes are most commonly used to show possession. They may also be used to form contractions, but as this use is informal, it is not described here.

- Add an apostrophe followed by the letter “s” to the singular form of nouns, even if they end in an “s”.

The doctor's patients were asked to complete a questionnaire.

James's research project will be completed by the end of the month.

- Add an apostrophe followed by the letter "s" to plural forms of nouns that do not end in an "s".

The doctor asked the children's mother to stay behind for a moment.

- Add an apostrophe to plural forms of nouns that end in an "s".

The mothers' group meets every Tuesday afternoon.

- Add an apostrophe followed by the letter "s" to the last noun to show joint possession.

Strunk & White's book on style is very popular with writers.

- It is not correct to use apostrophes with possessive pronouns as these already show possession.

The Executive Board made its decision.

They said that the books were theirs.

### Brackets ( [ ] )

The word brackets usually signifies square brackets; round brackets are parentheses and curly brackets, sometimes used to group items in a table, are braces.

Square brackets are used to indicate words interpolated in quotations. Their contents do not affect the punctuation of the quotation. Similarly, square brackets may be used to enclose an explanation within the text by someone other than the author.

Square brackets are also used in reference lists, to enclose English translations of non-English language references.

Jordan JR. Desarrollo psicomotor del niño [Psychomotor development of the child].

In: *Temas de pediatría [Aspects of paediatrics]*. Havana, Editora Universitaria, 1976.

See also "Parentheses".

### Colon (:)

The colon has three main uses:

- to mark the antithesis between two statements more sharply than a semicolon
- to introduce a list or series – never followed by a dash
- to indicate that the second statement is an explanation or amplification of the first.

Colons are also used to indicate a ratio. When used in this manner, there should be a non-breaking space on either side of the colon.

### Comma (,)

Correct usage of the comma is often a question of judgement. Commas are now used much less frequently than in the past, and their main purpose is to indicate a pause or to avoid ambiguity.

- In a list of three or more items, a comma should, in general, be consistently omitted or inserted before the final "and".

Patients were prescribed a combination of drug treatment, light exercise and a special diet.

*or*

Patients were prescribed a combination of drug treatment, light exercise, and a special diet.

- Care should be taken to ensure that each text is internally consistent in this respect. However, even when a comma is consistently omitted before the final “and”, an additional comma should be inserted wherever necessary to avoid ambiguity.

The plan should include elements such as the review and reform of existing legislation and policy, building data collection and research capacity, strengthening services for victims, and developing and evaluating prevention responses.

- Commas can often be used instead of parentheses and when separating relative clauses within a sentence.

By exercising for 30 minutes three times a week, you could lower your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Participants kept a record of their exercise routines, which ranged from walking to running to swimming, and reported the results to the researchers.

- A comma should be used to introduce a quotation.

At the press conference, the chief researcher reported, “The results of the study were encouraging, but more work is needed in the area”.

- A comma should be used to set off phrases that express contrast.

Some participants reported feeling more tired, not less.

### Dash

See “Hyphen, em rule and en rule”.

### Ellipses

See “Omitting and adding words”.

### Full point (.)

A full point, or period, should be used to separate statements between which there is no continuity of thought. This results in shorter, more concise sentences, and helps to avoid including too much information in a single sentence.

No full point is required for column headings, running heads, chapter titles and legends, or after abbreviations ending with the final letter of the word (see **Abbreviations** for examples).

An abbreviating full point, as at the end of etc. and Co., is omitted before a full point ending a sentence. Similarly, a stronger punctuation mark, such as a question mark or an exclamation mark, will replace a full point at the end of a sentence.

Hyphen (-), em rule (—) and en rule (-)**Hyphen (-)**

Hyphens are used to connect words that are more closely linked to each other than to the surrounding syntax and to avoid ambiguity. There are no hard and fast rules about their use. Certain conventions exist, but if there is a choice it is better to introduce hyphens only to avoid ambiguity. There is an overall tendency to use hyphens less than in the past and a few general rules are applicable, as follows.

*Hyphen after a prefix*

A hyphen should be used after a prefix to prevent the word being mistaken for another one, e.g. co-op, coop (but cooperate needs no hyphen); re-cover, recover; re-treat, retreat; un-ionized, unionized.

Prefixes such as anti- and semi- can often be used without a hyphen, e.g. antihypertensive, antidysrhythmic, semiconductor, semicircular. However, a hyphen is required to avoid doubling a vowel or a consonant, e.g. anti-inflammatory, anti-infective.

A hyphen is also required when the prefix is to a word beginning with a capital letter, e.g. anti-Darwinian, sub-Saharan.

*Hyphens with compound nouns and adjectives*

Some compound words remain hyphenated irrespective of their grammatical use, e.g. well-being, side-effect, extra-articular and Director-General. Others are hyphenated according to whether they are used as nouns or adjectives, e.g. breast milk (n.) *but* breast-milk substitutes (adj.), low cost (n.) *but* low-cost treatment (adj.), or whether they are used attributively or as predicates, e.g. up-to-date data *but* the data are up to date.

It is usually unnecessary to insert a hyphen after an adverb, e.g. carefully developed plan, but a hyphen is appropriate when an adverb might be mistaken for an adjective, e.g. *compare* little-used car and little used car.

The spelling list in section 5 includes hyphenated terms that commonly appear in WHO information products.

**Em rule (—)**

The em rule is used:

- to introduce an explanation or amplification of what immediately precedes it
- to gather up the subject of a long or complicated sentence
- to introduce a paradoxical or humorous ending to a sentence
- to indicate the omission of a word or part of a word
- to indicate a parenthetical statement
- to introduce items in a list (see **Lists**) or lines of dialogue, or to list phrases.

For typographical reasons, a spaced en rule is sometimes used – as in this guide – to perform the functions of an em rule.

**En rule (–)**

An en rule is longer than a hyphen and is most commonly used to convey a distinction in sense when the first part of the compound does not modify the meaning of the second part – unlike the hyphen. The en rule in these circumstances can usually be thought of as standing for “and” or “to”, and is usually unspaced, for example:

case–control study  
benefit–risk ratio  
gas–liquid chromatography  
oil–water interface.

The en rule signifies “to” in the following examples:

12–24 September  
pp. 5–55  
London–Brighton race.

However, if the words “from” or “between” are used, the en rule is inappropriate and “to” or “and” should be used, for example:

from 1990 to 1995  
between 7 and 12 members of the treatment group.

**Parentheses ( )**

Parentheses should be used sparingly since they tend to break up sentence structure and can too often be used to avoid having to organize one’s thoughts. A parenthesis can be marked off by commas, dashes or brackets, depending upon the closeness of its relationship to the sentence.

Spaced em or en rules are used as parenthetical dashes.

See also “Brackets”.

**Question mark (?)**

Question marks are necessary at the end of direct questions.

Requests in question form for the sake of politeness, e.g. “would you kindly tell me whether ...”, usually have question marks, although they are not strictly necessary.

**Semicolon (;)**

The semicolon marks a longer pause or more definite break than the comma. It links clauses or sentences too closely related to be cut off by a full point, but not closely enough related to be joined by a conjunction. The semicolon is also used to separate two or more linked clauses of more or less equal importance.

In a sentence containing long clauses with commas, the semicolon is used to indicate major breaks or appropriate pauses. The first word following a semicolon always starts with a lower-case letter, unless it is a proper noun.

### Word breaks

The 10th edition of Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (Springfield, MA, Merriam-Webster, 1993) gives syllable breaks and appropriate hyphenation points for each entry. This dictionary should not be used as a guide to spelling, however, as British spelling is preferred within WHO.

### Quotations

All quotations from printed material should correspond exactly to the original in wording, spelling, punctuation, use of capital letters, etc.

#### Punctuation of quotations

- If a question mark or an exclamation mark is part of the sentence quoted, put the punctuation mark within the quotation marks. If the punctuation mark is part of a longer sentence within which the quotation stands, put the punctuation mark outside the quotation marks. If the quotation and the sentence containing the quote end together, place a single full stop outside the closing quotation mark. Do not put a full stop at the end of the sentence when the question or exclamation mark is merely inside the quotation mark.

I asked him, "Are you feeling better?"

Why did you ask him, "Are you feeling better"?

She said, "I asked him if he was feeling better".

- If the quotation is part of a dialogue and is a sentence, put the full stop inside the closing quotation mark.

"I suppose," she said, "that he admires your work."

- When giving only a partial quotation or citing expressions as examples, put the full stop outside.

You should use hyphens in "easy-to-understand directions" but not in "the directions are easy to understand".

#### Long quotations

Short quotations should be enclosed in quotation marks and incorporated in the body of the text. Quotations that are longer than three typed lines should be indented or placed in smaller type; quotation marks are not needed.

#### Omitting and adding words

When part of the original text is omitted from a quotation, the text in question should be replaced by an ellipsis, with a space on either side ( . . . ). When an ellipsis is used at the end of an incomplete sentence, a full point should not be added. However, where the sentence is complete, the closing point is set close up, followed by an ellipsis for omission. Omissions should not change the meaning of the quotation.

"The goal," said Dr Smith, "is to enhance health by supporting countries and partners in identifying ... evidence-based approaches that foster health development".

Words added to a quotation for clarity should be enclosed in square brackets.

She said, “I go to my favourite country [Italy] every year on vacation”.

### **Quotations of material from a foreign language**

Quotations from a foreign language should be translated into English, with the words “(translation from [the original language])” inserted at the end of the quotation. If a quotation contains only a few foreign words, they may be left in the original language.

## **References**

A reference list should contain only those unrestricted works cited in the text as sources of data or information. Because much of the information produced by WHO builds on existing research and opinion, it is imperative that the Organization fulfils its ethical and legal requirements to acknowledge sources. It is also important that WHO provides readers with accurate and consistent links to additional information on a topic.

Creating a reference list is a two-step process: citing the source and informing the reader that more information is available; and creating the reference list that includes the necessary information for each citation.

### **Responsibility for the accuracy of references**

Authors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy, completeness and correct presentation of all material in reference lists and bibliographies. An editor may check any details that are obviously wrong or that appear doubtful, but the primary responsibility rests with the author.

### **Citing the source**

Citations can be inserted in the text using either the Harvard system or a numerical system. In WHO information materials the numerical system is preferred; it is obligatory for the WHO Technical Report Series.

The Harvard system shows the author and date in the body of the text. This may be done in one of two ways:

Ballance, Ewart & Fitzsimmons (2001) have reported ...

It has been reported (Ballance, Ewart & Fitzsimmons, 2001; Allsopp, 2002) that ...

With the numerical system, the references are numbered consecutively as they occur in the text. In the citation, the number is given in italics and placed in parentheses in the same point size as the text. The authors' names may or may not be given:

Hobbs & Wynn (12) have reported ...

A recent study in India (3) showed ...

The following table highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the Harvard and numerical systems.

<b>System</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Harvard	Immediately identifies the reference: if readers are familiar with the literature in the field, they will be able to identify the work cited without having to turn to the full reference; if the exact work is not known, the date will indicate how recent it is	<p>If many references are cited, long lists of authors may break up the text and make it difficult to follow the argument</p> <p>Care must be taken to ensure consistency between the text and the list, particularly if any references have been added or deleted</p> <p>Listing by author can be burdensome if there are corporate authors</p>
Numerical	Less intrusive	<p>Reader must turn to the reference list to identify the reference</p> <p>Last-minute changes may require the renumbering of the reference list and citations throughout the text</p>

### ***Formatting items in a reference list***

The format for presenting items in a reference list in WHO publications is based on the “Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals” (the so-called Vancouver style), formulated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, but with certain adaptations to meet WHO’s particular needs.

- List all authors when there are three or fewer; when there are four or more, give only the first author’s name and add “et al.”.
- Write out journal names in full – this is particularly helpful to readers whose mother tongue is not English.
- Italicize the titles of books and journals (use initial capital letters for the latter), but not the titles of individual papers or articles.
- Use punctuation as given in the examples below – note that there is no space between the colon and the page numbers.

References to unpublished findings should simply be followed, in parentheses, by the statement “unpublished data” or “unpublished observations”, as appropriate, accompanied by the name of the authority cited and the date:

... (L. Daley, unpublished data, 2003).

Personal communications should be dealt with similarly. However, if a document intended for general distribution is known to be available, it should be included in the reference list (see example below).

### Examples of references

The examples included here are those most commonly encountered in WHO publications; advice on the presentation of references not covered by these examples may be obtained from IMD (IMDQueries@who.int).

#### **Article in a journal**

Burt BA, Pai S. Sugar consumption and caries risk: a systematic review. *Journal of Dental Education*, 2001, 65:1017-1023.

When using the Harvard system the format should be modified slightly, the date being placed in parentheses immediately after the authors' names, followed by a full stop:

Willet MC (1995). Diet, nutrition, and avoidable cancer. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 103(Suppl. 8):S165-S170.

#### **Book**

Krug EG et al., eds. *World report on violence and health*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002.

#### **Chapter in a book**

Melton LJ III. Epidemiology of fractures. In: Riggs BL, Melton LJ III, eds. *Osteoporosis: etiology, diagnosis, and management*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1995:225-247.

#### **Corporate author**

Heart Protection Study Collaborative Group. MRC/BHF Heart Protection Study of antioxidant vitamin supplementation in 20 536 high-risk individuals: a randomised placebo-controlled trial. *Lancet*, 2002, 360:23-33.

If the corporate author is also the publisher, it need be mentioned only once. Where a WHO publication has no named author, WHO should be shown as the publisher:

*The international pharmacopoeia*, 3rd ed. Vol. 5. *Tests and general requirements for dosage forms; quality specifications for pharmaceutical substances and tablets*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2003.

#### **Databases and electronic publications**

Information from electronic sources, such as online journals and databases and CD-ROMs, can be referenced according to the styles that would be used for the equivalent print publications with a note added, if necessary, to indicate the electronic version:

Harrison CL, Schmidt PQ, Jones JD. Aspirin compared with acetaminophen for relief of headache. *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials*, 2 January 1992.

CANCERNET-PDQ [online database]. Bethesda, National Cancer Institute, 29 March 1996.

Lewin SA et al. Interventions for providers to promote a patient-centred approach in clinical consultations. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2001, (4):CD003267.

**Dissertation or thesis**

Rodrigues CS. *Dietary guidelines, sugar intake and caries increment. A study in Brazilian nursery school children* [thesis]. London, University of London, 1997.

**Document (numbered)**

Montresor A et al. *Guidelines for the evaluation of soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis at community level*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1998 (WHO/CDS/SIP/98.1).

**Foreign language reference**

Jarquín E, Carrillo F. *La economía política de la reforma judicial [The political economy of judicial reform]*. Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank, 1999.

**Legal and government documents**

Legal systems vary between countries, and the conventions for referring to legislation and judgements vary accordingly. The same is true for systems of government and the resolutions of parliaments.

When citing a court case in the body of a text the following style is suggested:

*Sidaway v. Bethlehem Royal Hospital Governors* [1985].

When providing more comprehensive information in the reference list, the exact format will vary according to the conventions of the legal system in question, but may resemble the following style:

*Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations v. Tobacco Institute of Australia*, 6.2 TPLR 2. Federal Court of Australia, 1991.

Legislation should be described according to local conventions, for example:

In Brazil, Order No. 490 of 25 August 1988 permits ...

Both New Zealand (Smoke-free Environments Act 1990) and Spain (Crown Decree No. 192/1988 of 4 March 1988) require ...

The information given in the citation may be sufficient to guide the reader to the source document. Alternatively, more detail can be given in a reference:

Nigeria. The Tobacco Smoking (Control) Decree 1990, Decree No. 20. Dated 25 June 1990. *International Digest of Health Legislation*, 1990, 41:640-641.

**Meeting reports and decisions**

Reference can be made to a statement recorded in a summary record of a meeting or to resolutions of the Executive Board and World Health Assembly. Citing the year and resolution number for a World Health Assembly resolution in the body of the text will be sufficient to allow the reader to look up the resolution. For example:

... as endorsed by the Fifty-fifth World Health Assembly in resolution WHA55.27 in 2002.

If you wish to include more comprehensive information in the reference list:

Resolution WHA39.27. The rational use of drugs. In: *Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly, Geneva, 5-16 May 1986. Volume 1. Resolutions and decisions, and list of*

*participants*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1986 (WHA39/1986/REC/1), Annex 5:93–105.

### Monograph in a series

*Prevention and control of schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis. Report of a WHO Expert Committee*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 912).

*WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization. Fiftieth report*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2002 (WHO Technical Report Series, No. 904).

### Newspapers and television

Scientific information in WHO publications and documents must refer to reliable, authoritative sources. Because of this, newspaper and magazine articles, or radio or television programmes, are unlikely to be the best sources available. However, it may occasionally be appropriate to cite these media as sources of information about popular opinion or public statement.

The formatting styles for references to medical and scientific journals are not easily applicable to other types of popular media, and may need to be adapted. The reference should provide sufficient information to guide the reader to the source document. For television and newspapers it is essential to identify the day, month and year of broadcast or publication. It may also be helpful to provide information such as the section designator, the page number and possibly the column number for the newspaper, or the time of broadcast for a television programme. If the name of the country or city is not included in the title, it should be added in parentheses and not italicized.

Lundberg GD. *The medical profession in the 1990s* [transcript]. *American Medical Television*, 15 September 1993.

If the writer of a newspaper article is named:

Rensberger B, Specter B. CFCs may be destroyed by natural process. *Washington Post*, 7 August 1989, A:2.

*or ...* 7 August 1989, Section A:2.

If the writer is not named:

[Anonymous]. Gene data may help fight colon cancer. *The Times* (London), 24 August 1990:4.

*or ...* 24 August 1990:4 (column 5).

### Published proceedings paper

DuPont B. Bone marrow transplantation in severe combined immunodeficiency with an unrelated MLC compatible donor. In: White HJ, Smith R, eds. *Proceedings of the third annual meeting of the International Society for Experimental Hematology*. Houston, TX, International Society for Experimental Hematology, 1974:44–46.

### Video or audio cassette

Clark R et al., eds. *Topics in clinical microbiology* [audio cassette]. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins (for the American Society for Microbiology), 1976.

### Information obtained on the Internet

*Food allergens: when food becomes the enemy.* Washington, DC, United States Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, and United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2001 ([http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/fdac/features/2001/401\\_food.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/fdac/features/2001/401_food.html), accessed 21 August 2002).

### List style

#### Numerical system

The references should be listed in numerical order at the end of each chapter or the full text, as appropriate, before any annexes.

#### Harvard system

The references should be presented in alphabetical order at the end of each chapter or the full text, as appropriate, before any annexes. The Harvard system requires that each reference have a named author or be listed under Anon. It is preferable to list, for example, WHO publications without named authors under WHO. In all cases, the citation in the text should correspond exactly to the form used in the reference list.

The following rules for ordering items in the list should be observed:

- A single-author entry comes before a multi-author entry beginning with the same name:

Bloggs PQ (1997)  
 Bloggs PQ, Grundy AS (1999)  
 Bloggs PQ, Simon CL (1999)  
 Bloggs PQ et al. (1977)

- All works attributed to one or more author should be listed together in chronological order, by year of publication, starting with the earliest work:

Daley L (1999)  
 Daley L (2001)  
 Daley L, Hyde J (2000)  
 Daley L, Hyde J (2002)  
 Daley L, Hyde J, Needham C (2001)  
 Daley L, Hyde J, Needham C (2003)

- Two or more works by the same author and published in the same year are distinguished by letters after the date, as shown:

Clark S (1990a) ...  
 Clark S (1990b) ...

### Spelling

Within WHO, British rather than American spelling is normally used. The general rule is to follow the first spelling listed in the latest edition of *The concise Oxford dictionary*.

There are, however, a number of exceptions, including:

- where a different spelling has become established usage in WHO;
- where there is a need to respect the recommendations of international nomenclature-setting bodies;
- quoted materials, where the original spelling must be reproduced exactly;
- book and article titles and organization names, such as the United States Department of Labor, where the original spelling must be reproduced.

Section 5 gives the preferred spellings and usage of many of the commonly encountered exceptions; it also includes *The concise Oxford dictionary* spellings that should be followed for many words that often cause doubt or difficulty, and gives some guidance on choice of words. Section 6 gives the preferred spelling of words ending in -ize, -ise and -yse.

### Spelling of medical terms

The spelling of disease names and other medical terms follows British rather than American usage. Some frequently found exceptions in WHO are:

estrogen, estrus, etc. (but oesophagus and oedema)  
 etiology  
 fetal, fetus, etc.  
 leukocyte, leukopenia.

As far as possible, the International Nomenclature of Diseases (several volumes published by CIOMS and CIOMS/WHO; see section 10) should be followed for disease names and their spelling; otherwise, standard medical dictionaries, such as those given below, should be consulted.

*Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary*, 29th ed. Philadelphia, PA, Saunders, 2000.  
*Stedman's medical dictionary*, 26th ed. Baltimore, MD, Williams & Wilkins, 1995.

The International Classification of Diseases is a tool for classification and is not intended to be a reference for nomenclature.

Eponymous names give no information about the nature of a disease or syndrome, and different names may be used in different countries. They should be avoided whenever possible; where eponymous names must be used, the apostrophe "s" is unnecessary:

Crohn disease *not* Crohn's disease  
 Down syndrome *not* Down's syndrome.

### Setting the spelling and grammar tool on your computer

WHO-recommended spellings have been incorporated into the default spellcheck dictionary for Synergy users of Microsoft Word 97 (shortly to be updated to Word XP). To activate this function in Word:

- Select the "Tools" menu.
- Scroll down to the "Language" bar.

- Drag over to and click on “Set Language”.
- Select “English (United Kingdom)”.

If you receive a document that has been prepared outside WHO, British English may not be the selected language. You will therefore need to reset the language for that document. However, even if British English is used, not all misspellings will be identified. For example, although WHO spells “breastfeed” as one word, the spellcheck function will accept the spellings “breast feed” (two words) and “breast-feed” because the words “breast” and “feed” are both valid in the spellcheck dictionary. Similarly, if you misspell a word, but the misspelling is a real word in its own right (e.g. “heath” instead of “health”), then the spellcheck cannot help you. Furthermore, the spellcheck will not address questions related to the use of capitals and italics; in these instances, you will need to refer to *The concise Oxford dictionary* or the WHO spelling list (see section 5). Careful checking of your documents will be as important as ever.

## **Structure of WHO**

### **WHO regions**

WHO Member States are grouped into six regions:

- WHO African Region
- WHO Region of the Americas
- WHO South-East Asia Region
- WHO European Region
- WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region
- WHO Western Pacific Region.

These regions are organizational groupings and, while they are based on geographical terms, are not synonymous with geographical areas. Note that the WHO regions are not the same as those of the United Nations.

The order of the region names in the above-mentioned list has become a convention within WHO. It is alphabetical by continent (or sea and ocean in the case of the last two) and ignores the qualifiers “south-east”, “eastern” and “western”. While another order of listing could be used, this one has the advantage of being identical to the French alphabetical order of the region names, so that a region will be in the same position in the list whichever language is used. This can be a help when preparing a document in both English and French that deals with a topic region by region.

Use initial capitals when referring to a specific WHO region, as in the list above. However, if you are making a general reference to WHO regions, lower case should be used.

### **WHO regional committees**

Each WHO region has a regional committee made up of representatives of the Member States and Associate Members, if applicable, in that region. The regional committees are decision-making bodies. The correct names of the regional committees are:

- WHO Regional Committee for Africa
- WHO Regional Committee for the Americas (also: Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization)<sup>1</sup>
- WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia
- WHO Regional Committee for Europe
- WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean
- WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.

Use initial capitals when referring to a specific WHO regional committee, as in the list above. However, if you are making a general reference to WHO regional committees, lower case should be used.

#### WHO regional directors

Use initial capital letters when referring to a specific WHO regional director:

Dr E. Samba, Regional Director for Africa.

#### WHO regional offices

Each WHO region has a regional office. The correct names of the WHO regional offices are:

- WHO Regional Office for Africa
- WHO Regional Office for the Americas (also: Pan American Sanitary Bureau)<sup>2</sup>
- WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia
- WHO Regional Office for Europe
- WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
- WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific.

Internally, WHO uses acronyms, such as AFRO, AMRO, etc. to refer to its regional offices. Avoid using these acronyms in documents intended for distribution outside the Organization, as they may lead to confusion.

It is especially important not to use expressions such as “AFRO decided ...” when in fact the WHO Regional Committee for Africa or the Member States in the Region made the decision and not the WHO Regional Office for Africa. Similarly, remarks about “the increase in alcohol dependence in parts of EURO” might be misconstrued as referring to the WHO Regional Office for Europe when in fact the reference is to the WHO European Region.

Use initial capital letters when referring to a specific WHO regional office, as in the list above. However, if you are making a general reference to WHO regional offices, lower case should be used.

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<sup>1</sup> The Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) simultaneously serves as the WHO Regional Committee for the Americas except when it discusses issues relating to PAHO’s constitution, PAHO’s relations with WHO or the Organization of American States, or PAHO’s role as an Inter-American Specialized Organization.

<sup>2</sup> The Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB) is the executive arm of PAHO; the bureau simultaneously serves as the WHO Regional Office for the Americas.

## Symbols

Symbols, which can be alphabetic, alphanumeric or graphic in form, are used to represent quantities, units, substances, chromosomes and mathematical operations. They are often, but not necessarily, abbreviations. Figures should always be used with unit symbols and abbreviations. The figure should be separated from the unit symbol by a non-breaking space. To avoid ambiguity, no more than one solidus should be used to divide units:

7 kg *not* seven kg.  
 m/s<sup>2</sup> (or m·s<sup>-2</sup>) *not* m/s/s.

When a medial multiplication point is used, it should be clearly identified.

## Système international d'Unités

See **Units of measurement**.

## Tables

Tables should be kept as simple as possible, with brief titles and column headings.

- Restrict the use of rules, unless the table is particularly complex.
- Vertical lines should generally be avoided, but straddle rules over column headings are useful for clarifying hierarchical arrangements.
- When units of measurement or multiplication factors appear in column headings, ensure that there is no possibility of misinterpretation.
- A column should not contain any blanks. Use em rules or abbreviations where data are missing, e.g. NA for “not applicable” or ND for “not determined”.
- Additional information should be given in the form of footnotes, generally identified with superscript letters placed in the appropriate order in the table from left to right and top to bottom. The same mark may be used on two or more elements if the corresponding note applies. For a table consisting only of words or letters, superscript numbers may be used as reference marks to identify footnotes. For a table that includes mathematical or chemical equations, a series of symbols may be used because of the risk of mistaking letters or numbers for exponents.

The footnotes should be printed immediately below the table. They are of four general kinds and should appear in this order:

- Explanations of abbreviations and notes on levels of statistical significance: a single asterisk is used for the lowest level of significance, two for the next level, and so on.
- Source and general notes: if data for a table are not the author's own but are taken from another source, the author should include a source note, introduced by the word “Source(s):”.
- Notes on specific parts of the table.
- Acknowledgements: if the entire table is reproduced with little or no change from another source, this should be acknowledged in a statement. Permission

must also be obtained from the author(s) and/or publisher(s) (see “Copyright and permissions” on the WHO-HQ Intranet).

- Every table must agree with, and be referred to in, the body of the text.
- In text, capitalize the word “table” when referring to a specific table, but use lower-case letters when referring to a generic table.

The data in Table 1 show the mortality rate.

The table below presents the data.

Some of the above-mentioned points are illustrated in the example below; the precise format for the title and use of boldface and italic will depend on the style adopted for the information product in question.

Table 1

**Concise descriptive title<sup>a</sup>**

Column heading <sup>c</sup>	Main column heading <sup>b</sup>	
	Extremely long subheading (unit) <sup>d</sup>	Subheading (unit)
Row heading indented on second and subsequent lines	10.3 ± 1.1 <sup>e</sup>	ND
Second row heading	9.1 ± 3.2	362
Subheading	2.3 ± 0.2*	
Subheading	6.8 ± 2.5	
Third row heading	3.0 ± 0.9	490
Fourth row heading	17.6 ± 4.4**	51

ND, not determined; \* $P < 0.05$ ; \*\* $P < 0.01$  (with appropriate details of the statistical test).

<sup>a</sup> Explanatory note, for example concerning experimental design and method, or source of data.

<sup>b</sup> Column headings may be ranged left or centred over the columns as appropriate (usually centred when the columns contain figures).

<sup>c</sup> First column heading normally ranged left and aligned with the bottom line of column headings.

<sup>d</sup> Explanatory note, for example concerning presentation of data (mean ± SD, etc.).

<sup>e</sup> Align columns of figures on the decimal point.

Adapted, by permission of the publisher, from Bloggs & Grundy (16).

## Temperature

Temperature should be given in degrees Celsius. The degree sign is part of the unit and should be adjacent to the C:

7 °C or 20–25 °C.

## **Time**

For the time of day, the 24-hour clock should be used:

16:30 (*not* 4:30 pm)

12:00

06:00.

## **Titles**

- Use initial capitals for formal titles, such as President, Vice-President, Chairman, Rapporteur and Secretary, when they appear immediately before a name.
- Do not abbreviate the title “Professor”.
- Do not separate the title from the name with a comma.
- For courtesy titles, such as Dr, Mr or Mrs, do not use a full point.

President Bush spoke on the anti-drug policy.

Dr Smith wrote the book on malaria.

## **Trade names**

Generic names should be used instead of trade names whenever possible. This is to avoid the implication that WHO endorses or recommends a particular manufacturer’s product (drug, pesticide, item of medical equipment) in preference to others. If a specific proprietary product must be named, it should be distinguished by an initial capital letter. It may be necessary to justify its inclusion if the context is particularly sensitive. Please contact LEG for advice on this topic.

See also **Drugs and pesticides**.

## **Units of measurement**

The *Système international d’Unités* is the culmination of over a century of international efforts to develop a universally acceptable system of units of measurement. The great expansion in world trade and exchange of scientific information following the Second World War gave added impetus to the development of such a system, and in 1954, the units that were to form its basis were adopted by the intergovernmental *Conférence générale des Poids et Mesures* (CGPM). In 1960, the CGPM adopted the name *Système international d’Unités* (International System of Units) and the international abbreviation SI. The SI is essentially an expanded version of the “metric system” that has been in use since 1901.

In 1977, in resolution WHA30.39, the World Health Assembly recommended the adoption of the SI by the entire scientific community, and particularly the medical community throughout the world. Therefore, SI units should always be used in WHO publications.

Exceptionally, for blood pressure, values may still be given in millimetres of mercury with the equivalent in kilopascals in parentheses:

120 mmHg (16 kPa).

The latest edition of the SI brochure, giving full details of the SI system, can be found on the Internet at <http://www.bipm.fr/pdf/si-brochure.pdf>.

A list of the most commonly used symbols, including those used for the SI base units, is given below. These symbols should be used only after a quantity expressed in figures, in tables, and in graphs.

ampere	A
becquerel	Bq
centimetre	cm
degree (angular)	°
degree Celsius	°C
gram	g
hour	h
kilogram	kg
kilometre	km
litre	l (spell out if confusion is possible)
metre	m
microgram	µg
milligram	mg
millimetre	mm
minute (of time)	min
mole	mol
newton	N
second (of time)	s
sievert	Sv
tonne	t
volt	V
watt	W

A compound abbreviation may sometimes be used to indicate a relationship between two different units of measurement:

mg/kg.

The SI incorporates the following prefixes, by means of which it is possible to form multiples of SI units.

Factor	Prefix	Symbol	Factor	Prefix	Symbol
$10^{-1}$	deci	d	$10^1$	deca	da
$10^{-2}$	centi	c	$10^2$	hecto	h
$10^{-3}$	milli	m	$10^3$	kilo	k
$10^{-6}$	micro	$\mu$	$10^6$	mega	M
$10^{-9}$	nano	n	$10^9$	giga	G
$10^{-12}$	pico	p	$10^{12}$	tera	T
$10^{-15}$	femto	f	$10^{15}$	peta	P
$10^{-18}$	atto	a	$10^{18}$	exa	E

To avoid ambiguity, no more than one solidus should be used to divide units. Use “per” in place of the second solidus or use an exponent, if appropriate:

g/kg per day  
m/s<sup>2</sup>.

### **Versus**

Versus should be spelt out in full in text or in figure/table captions. The abbreviation, *vs*, should be reserved for table column headings or within figures.

### **WHO headquarters telephone directory**

The WHO headquarters telephone directory is a useful reference source for checking the names of individuals and programmes and the programme structure at WHO headquarters. It is updated on a regular basis, so ensure that you have the latest version. An organigram is also available on the WHO-HQ Intranet.



### 3. Easily confused and troublesome words

This section contains an alphabetical list of easily confused and troublesome words.

#### A

##### **accept, except**

*Accept* means receive; give an affirmative answer; regard favourably. *Except* means not including.

He decided to accept the invitation to the meeting.

Everyone received the same medication, except those who were allergic to it.

##### **adverse, averse**

*Adverse* means antagonistic or hostile. *Averse* means disinclined or reluctant.

The drug was discontinued because of its adverse side-effects.

I am averse to giving a presentation because my knowledge of the proposed topic is limited.

##### **affect, effect**

As a verb, *affect* means to influence; *effect* means to bring about or accomplish. As a noun, *affect* has a narrow psychological meaning; *effect* means the result of an action. When you *affect* something, you have an *effect* on it.

The illness affected his ability to concentrate.

The treatment effected a rapid cure.

Labile affect is associated with certain organic brain syndromes.

The illness had an effect on his ability to concentrate.

##### **all of**

The *of* in *all of* is often unnecessary:

all of the treatments

*becomes*

all the treatments; all treatments; every treatment.

##### **alleviate, ameliorate**

*Alleviate* means to lessen or make less severe. *Ameliorate* means to make or become better; improve.

The drug helped to alleviate his pain.

Many of the villagers were suffering from dehydration and malnutrition and the team worked to ameliorate the situation.

**alternate, alternative**

As a verb, *alternate* means to change repeatedly between two contrasting conditions or do in turn repeatedly. As an adjective, *alternate* means every other; *alternative* means available as another possibility (of one or more things). As a noun, *alternate* means a deputy or substitute; *alternative* means any of two or more possibilities or offering a choice between two or more things.

The doctor advised him to alternate (v.) between ice packs and hot compresses on his leg. She was instructed to take the medication on alternate (adj.) days.

Because traditional medicines were not effective, the patient opted for an alternative (adj.) treatment.

An alternate (n.) was chosen in case one of the team members could not attend.

Seeing he had no alternative (n.) but to operate, the doctor scheduled the surgery.

**ameliorate**

See *alleviate*, *ameliorate*.

**among, between**

In general, use *among* to refer to more than two items and *between* to refer to two things. However, *between* is the only word available to express the relation of something to many surrounding items severally and individually; *among* expresses a relation to them collectively and vaguely.

Use *among* rather than *amongst*.

There was a consensus of opinion among the meeting participants.

The health clinic was open between 9:00 and 17:00.

There was an exchange of information between France, Germany and the Netherlands.

**an**

Use the article *an* in front of words that sound as if they begin with a vowel, regardless of how they are spelt:

an injection

an MRI

a hospital

a hotel.

**annex, appendix**

These two terms are synonyms. However, within WHO, the term *annex* is used to refer to a section or table of subsidiary matter such as a background document or survey questionnaire discussed in the text of a publication, while *appendix* is reserved for subsidiary matter discussed in the text of an annex.

**anticipate, expect**

*Anticipate* means be aware of something in advance and act accordingly. *Expect* means regard as likely or assume as a future event. If you *anticipate* changes, you think they are likely to happen and are preparing to deal with them; if you *expect* changes, you think they will be coming soon.

The aid workers had anticipated the arrival of the refugees and had set up a large camp.

In spite of the intensive immunization campaign, it was expected that further cases of the disease would be reported.

**anxious, eager**

*Anxious* means experiencing worry and unease; it implies fear or concern. *Eager* means full of keen desire or enthusiastic.

I was anxious about my forthcoming presentation to the World Health Assembly.  
She admires the health minister of her country and is eager to speak with him.

**appraise, apprise**

*Appraise* means estimate the value, quality or performance. *Apprise* means inform.

The district health officer will appraise participants' diagnostic skills 12 months after the end of the training course.  
The surveillance team was apprised of the prevalence of malaria in the coastal region.

**ascent, assent**

*Ascent* means an upward movement or rise. *Assent* is most often used as a verb, meaning express agreement or consent.

They made the ascent to the mountain peak.  
He assented to being examined by a doctor.

**assume, presume**

*Assume* means take (responsibility or control), suppose or take for granted (in the absence of proof), or begin to have a particular quality or appearance. *Presume* also means suppose or take for granted (but on the basis of probability), or be arrogant or daring enough to do something.

She assumed responsibility for [or control of] the project.  
Although there were no official statistics available for the area, it was assumed that the size of the population was about 12 000.  
In an effort to forget the past, he assumed another identity.  
The results of the first clinical trial of the vaccine have not yet been published, but I presume that they will include details of the possible neurological side-effects.  
The patient presumed to suggest that he should be included in the trial of the new drug.

**assure, ensure, insure**

*Assure* means to instil confidence in a person. It is also used widely in WHO in the context of quality assurance. *Ensure* means make sure an action will be taken. *Insure* refers to the business of an insurance company.

The doctor assured him that he would feel better after he began taking the medicine.  
Using an established writing style ensures consistency throughout your publication.  
The health clinic was insured against fire.

**averse**

See *adverse*, *averse*.

**B****between**

See *among*, *between*.

**bi-, semi-**

*Bi-* means two, occurring twice in every unit of time or once in every two units of time, or affecting two elements. *Semi-* means half, occurring twice in a specified period of time, or partly.

biped = two-legged

biannual = twice a year

biennial = every two years (or lasting two years)

semicircular = forming a half-circle

semi-annual = twice a year

semi-conscious = partially conscious.

The terms *bimonthly*, *biweekly* and *biyearly* should be avoided as they are ambiguous. Use *every two months* or *twice a month*, *every two weeks* or *twice a week* and *every two years* or *twice a year*, as appropriate, instead.

**billion**

*Billion* is defined as a thousand million ( $10^9$ ).

**C****classic, classical**

*Classic* means of the first class; of acknowledged excellence and remarkably typical or outstandingly important. *Classical* means of ancient Greek or Latin literature, art or culture or having the form used by the ancient standard authors.

The child exhibited the classic symptoms of malaria.

Montaigne is the earliest classical writer in the French language.

**compare to, compare with**

*Compare to* means liken one thing to another. *Compare with* is used in an examination for similarity or difference.

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

Patients in the treatment group were compared with those in the control group.

**complement, compliment**

As a noun, *complement* refers to something that completes or one of two things that go together and is also used to refer to a protein present in blood plasma that combines with an antigen–antibody complex to bring about destruction of foreign cells; *compliment* refers to a spoken or written expression of praise. As a verb, *complement* means to complete; *compliment* means to congratulate or praise.

The video was a good complement (n.) to the report.

She received many compliments (n.) regarding the quality of her report.

The shoes complement (v.) her dress.

His supervisor complimented (v.) him on the quality of his work.

**compose, comprise, include**

*Compose* means put together to form a whole. *Comprise* typically means consist of. *Comprised of* is therefore incorrect. *Include* means contain as part of a whole. Use *comprise* or *composed of* to introduce the complete list of items that make up a whole, and *include* to introduce a list of some of those items.

The solution is composed of [or comprises] extracts of five medicinal plants.

The report comprises [or is composed of] an introduction, a summary of different testing methods, three tables of recommended therapeutic regimens and a bibliography.

The report includes three tables of recommended therapeutic regimens.

**consequent, subsequent**

*Consequent* means following as a result or consequence. *Subsequent* means following a specified event in time.

Patients reported an improvement in their symptoms consequent to treatment with the new drug.

Certain side-effects were reported subsequent to treatment with the new drug.

**continual, continuous**

*Continual* means repeated, happening over and over again. *Continuous* means happening constantly without stopping.

The patient reported having continual migraines.

There was continuous noise from the traffic during the rush hour.

**convince, persuade**

*Convince* and *persuade* are not interchangeable. *Convince* means cause to believe firmly in the truth of something. *Persuade* means cause to do something through reasoning or argument.

The doctor convinced the patient that smoking was harmful to health.

The doctor persuaded the patient to complete the treatment prescribed.

**council, counsel**

*Council* is an advisory body of people formally constituted and meeting regularly. As a verb, *counsel* means advise. As a noun, *counsel* means advice.

The council (n.) met to discuss the proposed budget.

He counselled (v.) her over several months to help her come to terms with her illness.

She sought counsel (n.) from her lawyer.

**D**

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**data**

*Data* is the plural form of *datum* and should be used with a plural verb.

The data were made available in March.

**decimals**

Decimals, such as 0.2 or 0.75, express a value that is less than 1.0 and therefore should assume a singular noun and/or verb. A decimal point should always be preceded by a figure, if necessary a zero.

0.75 is the same as 75/100.

The clinic was located 0.7 km from the pregnant woman's house.

**defective, deficient**

*Defective* means imperfect, faulty or lacking or deficient in something. *Deficient* means incomplete; not having enough of a specified quality or ingredient.

The weighing scales at the clinic were defective.

The children's diet was deficient in vitamin C.

**deprecate, depreciate**

Semantic change has caused some overlap between these words. Nowadays, *depreciate* deals mostly with money and property, meaning reduce in price or value, diminish in worth. But figuratively *depreciate* is sometimes used to mean make something seem of less worth and hence disparage, belittle or put down. *Deprecate* primarily means disparage, belittle or put down, as well as express mild disapproval, particularly when it is self-criticism. Reserve *depreciate* for financial comments and use *deprecate* for negative criticism of any sort.

The properties in the area have depreciated greatly since the landslide occurred.

He deprecated the ability of the team to deal with the situation.

**direct, directly**

*Direct* means extending or moving in a straight line or by the shortest route; not crooked or circuitous. *Direct* also means straightforward; going straight to the point. *Directly* means at once; without delay.

The most direct route is often the quickest.

She was very direct in her criticism of the project.

He was asked to report to the regional office directly [at once].

He was asked to report direct to the regional office [to go straight there].

**discreet, discrete**

*Discreet* indicates a careful behaviour in conduct and speech. *Discrete* indicates a separate entity.

Information about patients is confidential, so be discreet when talking in the clinic reception area.

Subjects in the study were randomly assigned to two discrete groups: the treatment group or the controls.

**disinterested, uninterested**

*Disinterested* means not influenced by one's own advantage, impartial. *Uninterested* means not interested or unconcerned, indifferent.

Medical staff are required to be disinterested when dealing with patients.

Patients with depression are often uninterested in their surroundings.

**dissatisfied, unsatisfied**

*Dissatisfied* means displeased, discontented. *Unsatisfied* means not satisfied.

She was dissatisfied with the suggestion that she should have to travel even further for treatment.

He was unsatisfied with the analytical methods used in the study, which had been shown to have several flaws.

**E**

**each, every**

*Each* and *every* are not synonymous. *Each* means every one of two or more people or items, regarded and identified separately; it highlights individuality. *Every* refers to all the individual members of a group or collection of items; it is also used to indicate the frequency of a particular action or event.

The doctors each received awards for their research efforts.

He had bandages on each hand.

Every patient was offered a home visit.

The doctor checked the patient's condition every 30 minutes.

See also **everyone**.

**eager**

See **anxious, eager**.

**economic, economical**

*Economic* means of or relating to economics or maintained for profit. *Economical* means sparing in the use of resources; avoiding waste.

In view of the disastrous economic situation of the local clinic, some services were transferred to the hospital in the neighbouring town.

Several economical measures were adopted in an effort to improve the situation, including hiring local staff and limiting overtime.

**effect**

See **affect, effect**.

**e.g., i.e.**

The abbreviation *e.g.* means *for example*. The abbreviation *i.e.* means *that is*. They are not interchangeable. In WHO house style, neither *e.g.* nor *i.e.* is followed by a comma.

Psychological problems in obese people were found to be worst in those who were also chronically ill or injured, e.g. suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, cancer or spinal injury.

Although the absolute prevalence of obesity-related diseases may vary between different populations, the relative risk of any particular disease (i.e. risk for an obese person as compared with a lean person) is fairly similar throughout the world.

**either ... or, neither ... nor**

*Or* is used in conjunction with *either*. *Either ... or* is used when referring to an unavoidable choice between two alternatives. *Nor* is used in conjunction with *neither*. *Neither ... nor* means not the one nor the other (of two things) or not either.

Use either incineration or chemical disinfection.

Neither WHO nor UNICEF is directly involved in the project.

**electric, electrical**

*Electric* means of, powered by or charged with electricity; producing or capable of generating electricity. *Electrical* means of or concerning electricity.

An electric centrifuge.

An electrical engineer.

**elicit, illicit**

*Elicit* means draw out or evoke. *Illicit* means unlawful or forbidden.

The family hoped that talking to their mother, who was in a coma, would elicit some sort of response from her.

The man was arrested for having illicit drugs in his possession.

**endemic, epidemic, pandemic**

*Endemic* means regularly or only found among a particular people or in a certain region. *Epidemic* is a widespread occurrence of a disease in a community at a particular time. *Pandemic* means prevalent over a whole country or the world.

Malaria is endemic in many parts of Africa.

An epidemic of Ebola disease was reported in country X.

In recent years, HIV/AIDS has become pandemic.

**enquire, inquire**

*Enquire* is the preferred term within WHO.

**ensure**

See *assure*, *ensure*, *insure*.

**epidemic**

See *endemic*, *epidemic*, *pandemic*.

**every**

See *each*, *every*.

**everyone**

Requires a singular verb and singular pronouns. Singular pronouns can be awkward and are often best avoided by rewriting.

Everyone is having his or her blood tested.

*becomes*

Everyone is having a blood test.

See also *each*, *every*.

**evident**

*Evident* means plain or obvious, clear.

It was evident that more resources would be required if the programme was to continue.

**except**

See **accept**, **except**.

**expect**

See **anticipate**, **expect**.

**F**

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**fewer, less**

*Fewer*, the comparative of *few*, is used when referring to a smaller number of something. *Less*, the comparative of *little*, is used when referring to a smaller amount of something.

Country X reported fewer cases of schistosomiasis in 2003 than in 2002.

The course of treatment costs less than US\$ 50 per patient.

**forego, forgo**

*Forego* means precede in time or place. *Forgo* means abstain from; go without; relinquish.

The foregoing study had suggested that the treatment regimens required revision.

It has been estimated that about 20% of patients forgo treatment.

**former, latter**

Use *former* and *latter* to refer to the first and second, respectively, of a pair. Avoid using these terms to refer to members of groups containing more than two, which can cause confusion.

The patients were assigned to either the treatment group or the control group. The former received the drug under test at the therapeutic dose, while the latter received a placebo.

**G**

---

**gender, sex**

See **sex**, **gender**.

**good, well**

As an adjective, *good* means to be desired or approved of, welcome, pleasant, having the required qualities, of a high standard; *well* means in good health. *Well* is commonly used as an adverb meaning in a satisfactory or thorough manner or very probably. It is often used in combination with past participles to form adjectival compounds. If the adjectival compound is placed before the noun, it should be hyphenated; if it is placed afterwards, no hyphen is required.

He was widely considered to be a good (adj.) doctor.  
The child complained that he did not feel well (adj.).  
The clinic was well (adv.) established in the community.  
Metronidazole is a well-established treatment for giardiasis.

## H

### **historic, historical**

*Historic* means famous or important in history, or potentially so. *Historical* means of or concerning history, or belonging to or set in the past.

The Declaration of Alma-Ata was a historic agreement for primary health care.  
Historical data were used to map the spread of bubonic plague in England in the 14th century.

## I

### **i.e.**

See **e.g.**, **i.e.**

### **illicit**

See **elicit**, **illicit**.

### **impact**

As a noun, *impact* means the action of one object coming forcibly into contact with another or a marked effect or influence. As a verb, it means coming forcibly into contact with something or having a marked effect or influence; however, this usage is primarily confined to North America and should, if possible, be avoided in WHO publications.

HIV/AIDS has had a severe impact (n.) on global health.

### **imply, infer**

*Imply* means suggest a conclusion. *Infer* means draw a conclusion from specific or unspecified evidence.

He implied in his discussion that HIV could be the causative virus.  
We inferred from the epidemiological data that HIV was the causative virus.

### **impracticable, impractical**

*Impracticable* means impossible in practice. *Impractical* means not practical.

The plan quickly proved to be impracticable, given the limited resources available.  
The measuring device proved impractical for use in the field.

### **incidence**

See **prevalence**, **incidence**.

**include**

See *compose*, *comprise*, *include*.

**infer**

See *imply*, *infer*.

**inquire**

See *enquire*, *inquire*.

**insure**

See *assure*, *ensure*, *insure*.

**L**

**latter**

See *former*, *latter*.

**less**

See *fewer*, *less*.

**listing, list**

A *listing* refers to an item on a list. A *list* is the compilation of listings.

**M**

**majority, most**

*Majority* means most of a set of people, or the greater part numerically. It should not be used as a substitute for the greater part of a whole that is not numerical; *most* would be the better choice.

The majority of the patients responded to treatment.  
Disease X is endemic in most of the African continent.

**media, medium**

*Media* refers to the main forms of mass communication (e.g. television, radio and the press). It is the plural form of *medium* and should therefore be used with a plural verb.

The media are critical to the effective sharing of health information.  
Television is a powerful medium for sharing health information.

**methodology, method**

*Methodology* is the study of, or a system of, methods used in a particular field. *Method* is a particular procedure for achieving something.

More research is needed on diagnostic methodology.  
More diagnostic methods are needed.

**militate, mitigate**

*Militate* means be a powerful factor in preventing something; it is usually followed by *against*. *Mitigate* means make less intense, severe or painful.

The population militated against the military coup.

Palliative treatment is intended to mitigate suffering among patients who are terminally ill.

**more than, over**

Use *more than* when referring to quantities or to compare two quantities. *Over* is used when referring to a place/location.

The doctor treated more than 20 patients before 10:00.

The sign hung over the door.

**most**

See **majority, most**.

**N****nausea, nauseous, nauseated**

*Nausea* is a condition that is brought on by something that is *nauseous*, which makes one *nauseated*.

**neither ... nor**

See **either ... or, neither ... nor**.

**O****ongoing**

Avoid if possible. Use *current* or *still in progress*.

**oral, verbal**

*Oral* is most often used as an adjective, meaning by word of mouth; done or taken by the mouth; of or relating to the mouth. *Verbal* is most often used as an adjective, meaning of or concerned with words.

The students were given an oral examination, followed by a written test.

She gave her verbal approval for the printing of the brochure.

**over**

See **more than, over**.

**P****pandemic**

See **endemic, epidemic, pandemic**.

**people, persons**

People is the preferred term.

**persuade**

See **convince**, **persuade**.

**practicable, practical**

*Practicable* means that can be done or used. *Practical* means of or concerned with practice or use rather than theory, or suited to use or action; designed mainly to fulfil a function.

The method was not practicable, given the limited resources of the laboratory.

The handbook was intended as a practical guide for health workers.

**precede, proceed**

*Precede* means come or go before in time, order, importance. *Proceed* means go forward.

The planning stage precedes the writing of a publication.

They met to discuss how they were going to proceed with the project.

**prescribe, proscribe**

*Prescribe* means advise and authorize the use of (a medicine or course of treatment) or lay down or recommend a course of action. *Proscribe* means forbid, especially by law, or reject or denounce.

The doctor prescribed medication to relieve her back pain.

The sale, marketing and consumption of alcohol are proscribed in certain cultures.

**presume**

See **assume**, **presume**.

**prevalence, incidence**

The *prevalence* of a disease is the number of cases in a defined population at a specified point in time, while its *incidence* is the number of new cases arising in a given period in a specified population. The relation between prevalence and incidence varies between diseases. There may be a high prevalence and a low incidence, as for diabetes, or a low prevalence and a high incidence, as for the common cold; colds occur more frequently than diabetes but last for only a short time, whereas once contracted diabetes is permanent.

The *prevalence rate* and the *incidence rate* are often expressed as the number of cases per 1000 population. For further details, see the following publication:

Beaglehole R, Bonita R, Kjellström T. *Basic epidemiology*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 1993 (updated and reprinted 2000).

**principal, principle**

As an adjective, *principal* means most important. As a noun, *principal* means the leader, ruler or superior. *Principle* refers to a fundamental truth or law as the basis of reasoning or action.

The principal (adj.) goal of the intervention was to reduce transmission of disease.  
The principal (n.) reprimanded the student for cheating.  
The study method was based on the principle of gravity.

**proceed**

See **precede**, **proceed**.

**programme, program**

*Programme* is used, except when referring to computer *programs* or in proper names including the latter spelling, such as the National Immunization Program of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Q

**quality**

When referring to the *quality* of something, be sure to specify the level, e.g. high or low. *High* is not implicit in phrases such as “quality services”.

## R

**rate, ratio**

*Rate* is used to compare two measurements that have different units. *Ratio* is used when comparing numbers that have the same units. When a colon is used to indicate a ratio, there should be no space between the numbers and the colon.

Fetal heart rate is normally 120–160 beats per minute.

The male:female ratio in the group was 3:1.

**respective, respectively**

*Respective* is an adjective that means concerning or appropriate to each of several individually; proper to each. *Respectively* is an adverb that means for each separately or in turn, and in the order mentioned.

After the meeting, the participants returned to their respective institutions.

The concentrations of boron, copper and nickel were respectively 0.30, 2.10 and 0.01 mg/litre.

## S

**seasons**

*Seasons* are not the same in the northern and southern hemispheres. Avoid referring to a specific season unless the season is of significance. If it is necessary, use lower case for the season.

The malaria study was carried out in the early part of the year, which in Country X is spring, with heavy rainfall and fresh vegetation.

**semi-**

See **bi-**, **semi-**.

**sex, gender**

*Sex* refers to those characteristics of women and men that are biologically determined, while *gender* refers to those that are socially constructed.

Estimates of the global burden of injury are presented by sex, age group, WHO region and income level.

Country X had investigated gender differences in the provision of health care and was endeavouring to eliminate conditions attributable to gender discrimination.

**stationary, stationery**

*Stationary* means remaining in one place, not moving. *Stationery* refers to writing materials sold by a stationer.

Medical services were made available from a stationary health clinic in the village.

The cost of stationery should be included in the budget.

**subsequent**

See **consequent**, **subsequent**.

**T**

**that, which**

*That* is used to introduce an essential clause – a clause that cannot be eliminated from the sentence without changing the meaning of the sentence. *Which* typically is used to introduce a non-essential clause that must be set off by commas.

The patient complained of side-effects from the steroids that she had been prescribed.

Steroids, which can have side-effects, were prescribed by her physician.

**U**

**uninterested**

See **disinterested**, **uninterested**.

**unsatisfied**

See **dissatisfied**, **unsatisfied**.

**use, utilize**

Use is almost always better and is the preferred term within WHO.

**V**

**verbal**

See **oral**, **verbal**.

**W**

**well**

See **good**, **well**.

**which**

See *that*, *which*.

**while, whilst**

Use *while*, rather than *whilst*.

**who, whom**

*Who* is a subjective personal pronoun, meaning it performs an action. *Whom* is an objective personal pronoun, meaning it receives an action.

- When the answer to a question begins with a subjective personal pronoun, such as he, she or they, use *who* in the question.

Who is the doctor in charge of the clinic? She is the doctor in charge.

- When the answer to a question is an objective personal pronoun, such as him, her or them, use *whom* in the question.

For whom did you ask? I asked for him.

- When the pronoun acts as the subject of a clause, use *who* in the clause.

She is a talented researcher who is making great progress in the fight against AIDS.

- When the pronoun acts as the object of the clause, use *whom* in the clause.

To whom did you speak about funding for the project?

**with regard to**

*Not* with regards to.

## 4. Non-discriminatory language

Each day, people from around the world – from a variety of nations and cultures, of differing ages and with various degrees of physical ability – turn to WHO for credible and reliable health information. WHO’s health information must address all people equally and fairly. It should not discriminate against, stereotype or demean people on the basis of their sex, ethnicity, physical or intellectual impairments, or age. The following guidelines should help to ensure that language is free from bias and will avoid causing offence.

### Non-sexist language<sup>1</sup>

Non-sexist language, sometimes called *sex-neutral*, *inclusive* or *gender-neutral language*,<sup>2</sup> treats women and men equally.

#### Titles of address, rank, occupation and status

- Where titles are appropriate, use parallel titles. For example, *Mr* does not denote the marital status of a man, so the marital status of a woman should not be included in her title unless she requests it. Use *Ms* to parallel *Mr*, not *Miss* or *Mrs*, but respect individual wishes:

Ms J. Smith

Mr J. Smith

Ms Smith and Mr Jones.

- If the name and/or sex of a correspondent are unknown, do not assume that the individual is male. To extend equal treatment to both sexes, use *Dear Sir or Madam*; *Dear Sir/Madam*; *Dear Madam or Sir*; or *Dear Madam/Sir*. You can also use a generic title, such as *Dear Manager*, *Dear Director*, *Dear Colleague*, etc.
- When listing names, use alphabetical order except where order by seniority or some other characteristic is required.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of these examples are taken from the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. Washington, DC, American Psychological Association, 2001. Copyright © 2001 by the American Psychological Association. Reproduced with permission. No further reproduction or distribution, electronic or otherwise, is permitted without written permission from the American Psychological Association.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the use of the terms “sex” and “gender”, see section 3, “Easily confused and troublesome words”.

### Personal pronouns

Many authors believe that their readers will assume that terms such as *he* and *him* include women. Most readers make no such assumption. Some authors also wrongly believe that it is acceptable to include a disclaimer stating that all masculine nouns and pronouns used in a publication refer to both males and females.

- Use *he*, *his*, *him* or *himself* only when referring specifically to a male person.
- The use of *he or she*, *she and he* and *she/he* to refer to people of both sexes is cumbersome. To avoid this:

— rewrite the sentence in the plural:

Each researcher is responsible for writing his own report.

*becomes*

Researchers are responsible for writing their own reports.

— rewrite the sentence in the passive:

He must conduct the tests first thing in the morning.

*becomes*

The tests must be conducted first thing in the morning.

— rewrite and omit pronouns:

The client is usually the best judge of the value of his counselling.

*becomes*

The client is usually the best judge of the value of counselling.

### Patronizing or demeaning expressions

Avoid terms or expressions that are patronizing or demeaning. Use *ladies* to parallel *gentlemen* and *women* to parallel *men*:

The client's husband lets her teach part-time.

*becomes*

The client teaches part-time.

### Sex stereotyping

- Avoid sexist assumptions and be careful not to include hidden stereotypes:

The client's behaviour was typically female.

*becomes*

The client's behaviour was (specify).

Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.

*becomes*

Research scientists often neglect their spouses and children.

### Sex-specific descriptions and illustrations

- Specify sex only if necessary to the sense. By including a reference to sex, you imply that women or men are oddities in certain situations or occupations:

A woman doctor was running the research programme.

*becomes*

A doctor was running the research programme.

A male nurse conducted the examination.

*becomes*

A nurse conducted the examination.

- When referring to a position, quality or action that might apply to either sex, use a non-sexist term:

foreman *becomes* supervisor

policeman *becomes* police officer.

- Avoid the unnecessary use of man or composite words that use -man, which imply that the term is exclusively male:

the average man, the man in the street *becomes* the average person, people in general

manpower *becomes* human resources or personnel.

### Language and ethnicity

- Unless there is a valid reason for doing so, do not refer to the racial or cultural background of a person or group.
- Stereotypes are broad generalizations that are applied to a person or group of people. Stereotypes detract from a person's individuality, and racial and cultural stereotypes are offensive and should be avoided.
- Acknowledge the diversity within racial and ethnic groups. For example, some authors lump together the various Asian ethnicities under the single term Asian, despite their many differences.
- Avoid terms such as *the western world*, which imply that everything is viewed from the standpoint of western Europe; use *developed* or *industrialized countries* instead. There is also an increasing tendency for the terms *North* and *South* to be used to imply a particular stage of development. Usage of such terms should be restricted to a geographical context only. Similarly, refer to *developing countries* rather than *underdeveloped countries* or *the Third World*.

### Language and disabilities

- Avoid depersonalizing people with disabilities. Collective terms such as *the disabled*, *the handicapped*, *the blind* and *the deaf* equate the people with their disabilities. Do

not hide, ignore or downgrade the relevance of disability, but avoid making the disability the focus of description except when the topic is disability. Place people first and their disabilities second in the description:

physically handicapped *becomes* people with physical disabilities  
epileptics *becomes* people with epilepsy.

- Avoid using the terms *victim* or *sufferer* to refer to a person who has or has had an illness, disease or disability. These terms are dehumanizing and emphasize powerlessness. However, the term *victim* is acceptable in certain circumstances, such as when referring to instances of poisoning or natural disaster.
- Avoid terms that define disability as a limitation. A person in a wheelchair is a *wheelchair user* or *uses a wheelchair*, not *confined to a wheelchair* or *wheelchair-bound*.

### **Language and age**

- Avoid stereotyping older people as frail, incapable of independence, a burden on society or no longer active or productive. Similarly, avoid stereotyping young people as inexperienced, rebellious, immature or always vibrant. Referring to someone's age may contribute to discrimination.
- Other forms of language that may cause offence when used to refer to people include ageist terms such as *geriatric*. Substitute less impersonal words such as *older people* or *elderly patients*.

## 5. WHO spelling list<sup>1</sup>

### A

above-mentioned  
abridgement  
absorbency, absorbent, absorption  
acclimatize  
accommodation  
accumulate  
acetylation  
acknowledgement  
acquired immunodeficiency syndrome  
(*not*...immune deficiency...) (*abbr.*  
= AIDS)  
adaptation (*not* adaption)  
adaptor (*not* adapter)  
addendum (*pl.* addenda)  
adenopathy  
ad hoc  
adsorb, adsorption  
advertise  
advice (n.)  
advise (v.)  
adviser (*not* advisor)  
*Aedes* (*not* *Aëdes*)  
aerial  
aeroplane  
aesthetic  
aforementioned  
aforesaid  
African Region (of WHO)  
after-care  
after-effect  
afterwards (*not* afterward)  
age group  
agenda (treat as singular; *pl.* agendas)  
ageing  
aggrandize  
agonist, agonistic  
agonize  
agranulocytosis  
aid (thing)  
aide (person)  
aide-memoire  
AIDS (*abbr.* for acquired  
immunodeficiency syndrome; *see*  
*also* human immunodeficiency  
virus)  
AIDS-related  
airborne  
air-conditioning  
airflow  
alga (*pl.* algae)  
alias  
align, alignment  
alkalize  
all right (*not* alright)  
alphabetize  
alternate, alternately (deputy *or* in turn)  
alternative, alternatively (options)  
aluminium (*not* aluminum)  
Alzheimer disease (*not* Alzheimer's)  
amenorrhoea  
amfetamine  
amino acids  
aminoglycosides  
amoeba (*pl.* amoebae), amoebiasis  
among (*not* amongst)  
amortize  
anabolize  
anaemia  
anaesthesia, anaesthetic, anaesthetize  
analyse  
ancylostomiasis (*not* ankylo...)  
anergic, anergy

<sup>1</sup> These spellings have been incorporated into the default spellcheck dictionary for Synergy users of Microsoft Word 97 (shortly to be updated to Word XP). For further information, see section 2, "Spelling".

- anglicize  
 animal feed (*but* animal-feed supplements)  
 ankylose, ankylosing spondylitis  
 annex (n. and v.)  
 annul, annulled, annulment  
 anodize  
*Anopheles*  
 anopheline mosquitoes; anophelines  
 antagonist, antagonistic  
 antagonize  
 antecedent  
 antedate  
 antemortem  
 antenatal  
 anthelmintic  
 antibacterial  
 antibiotic  
 antibody  
 anticoagulant  
 anticomplement  
 anticonvulsant  
 antidepressant  
 antidiscrimination  
 antiemetic  
 antiepileptic  
 antifungal  
 anti-gas-gangrene  
 anti-infective  
 anti-inflammatory  
 antileprosy  
 antimalarial  
 antimicrobial  
 antineoplastic  
 antioxidant  
 anti-personnel  
 antiretroviral  
 antiserum (*pl.* antisera)  
 anuria  
 any one (of several)  
 anyone (anybody)  
 apartheid  
 apnoea, apnoeic  
 apologize  
 apostrophize  
 appendix (*pl.* appendices, all senses)  
 appetize  
 appraise (to value)  
 apprise (to inform)  
 a priori  
 arbovirus(es)  
 arc, arced, arcing (*not* arcked, etc.)  
 artefact (*not* artifact)  
 arteriosclerosis  
 ascariasis  
 assure (dispel potential doubt; *compare* ensure, insure)  
 atherosclerosis  
 attaché  
 audio cassette  
 audio tape (n.)  
 audiovisual  
 auroscopy  
 authorize  
 autoimmune  
 autoxidation  
 avant-garde
- B**
- bacillary  
 backward (adj.)  
 backwards (adv.)  
 bacteraemia, bacteraemic  
 bacteriologically  
 bacteriostatic  
 bacterium (*pl.* bacteria)  
 baseline (n. and adj.)  
 bedbug  
 bednet  
 benefit, befitted  
 benchmark  
 benefit–risk (ratio)  
 benefit, benefited, benefiting  
 biannual (twice a year)  
 biased  
 bibliographic (*not* bibliographical)  
 biennial  
 biennium (*pl.* bienniums)  
 biliary  
 bilirubin  
 bimonthly, biweekly, biyearly (ambiguous; avoid and rephrase – every two months or twice a month, etc., as appropriate)  
 bioassay  
 bioavailability  
 birth rate  
 birth weight (*but* low-birth-weight infants)

- blasé  
 blender (*not* blendor)  
 bloodborne  
 blood cells  
 blood donor  
 blood group (n.; *but* blood-grouping)  
 blood-meal  
 blood pressure (n.; *but* blood-pressure-related)  
 bloodstream  
 blood type (n.; *but* blood-typing)  
 body weight  
 boiling-point  
 bona fide  
 bookkeeper  
 borderline (n. and adj.)  
 born (child)  
 borne (carried)  
 bottle-fed, bottle-feed (v.), bottle-feeding  
 break down (v.)  
 breakdown (n. and adj.)  
 breastfed, breastfeed (v.), breastfeeding  
 breast milk (*but* breast-milk substitute)  
 bronchoscopy  
 budget, budgeting, budgeted  
 Bunsen burner  
 bureau (*pl.* bureaux)  
 by-law  
 bypass (n. and v.)  
 by-product
- C**
- °C (no space after °)  
 caesarean  
 caesium  
 caliper  
 camera-ready  
 cannot (one word)  
 canvas (cloth)  
 canvass (solicit)  
 capitalize  
 carcass (*not* carcase)  
 cardiovascular  
 caregiver, carer (*not* caretaker)  
 carte blanche  
 caseation  
 case detection (*but* case-detection rate)  
 case-fatality rate  
 case-finding  
 case history  
 case-load  
 case-study  
 caster (machine, sugar)  
 castor (oil, wheels)  
 catalogue  
 catalyse  
 catastrophe  
 categorize, categorizing, categorized, categorization  
 cavitory  
 cavitation  
 census  
 centimetre (cm)  
 centralize  
 centre, centring  
 century (20th, etc.)  
 cerebrospinal  
 cerebrovascular  
 Chagas disease (*not* Chagas')  
 checklist  
 check up (v.)  
 check-up (n.)  
 chef-d'oeuvre (*pl.* chefs-d'oeuvre)  
 chemotherapy, chemotherapeutic  
 cheque (banking)  
 chequered (flag, career)  
 childbearing  
 childbirth  
 child-spacing  
*Chlamydia*, chlamydiae, chlamydial  
 cholestatic  
 classroom  
 clearing house  
 cliché  
 coauthor  
 co-eluting  
 coenzyme  
 coexist, coexistence  
 cofactor  
 coinfection  
 cold chain (*but* cold-chain equipment)  
 colour, coloration  
 colorimeter, colorimetric  
 combat, combated, combating, combative  
 commit, commitment  
 common sense (n.)  
 common-sense (adj.)

- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
- communiqué
- community-based
- complement, complementary (make complete, immunology, medicine)
- complexion
- compliment, complimentary (praise, free, as a compliment)
- comprise
- compromise
- computerize
- concomitant
- connection (*not* connexion)
- consensus (*not* concensus)
- consummate (adj. and v.)
- continual (intermittent but frequent)
- continuous (without a break)
- contraindicate, contraindication
- conveyor
- cooperate, cooperation, cooperative
- coopt
- coordinate, coordination, coordinator
- co-rapporteur
- cornerstone
- corrigendum (*pl.* corrigenda)
- corticosteroid
- co-secretary
- cosponsor
- cost–benefit (ratio)
- cost-effective (approach) (adj.; *but* the approach is cost effective)
- cost–effectiveness (ratio)
- co-trimoxazole
- cotton wool (*not* cottonwool)
- councillor (member of council)
- counsel (give advice; legal counsel)
- counsellor (adviser)
- counterfeit
- counterproductive
- countries with economies in transition
- countrywide (adj.)
- coup d'état
- coverglass
- coverslip
- co-worker
- crèche
- criterion (*pl.* criteria)
- criticism
- criticize
- critique (n.)
- cross-match, cross-matching
- cross-react, cross-reaction
- cross-reference
- cross-resistance
- cross-section
- curriculum (*pl.* curricula)
- curriculum vitae (*pl.* curricula vitae)
- cut-off (point)
- cytochrome
- cytokine
- ## D
- dare say (*not* daresay)
- data (plural word; *sing.* datum)
- databank
- database
- day care (*but* day-care centre)
- daytime
- deadline
- death rate
- debridement
- decentralize
- decision-maker, decision-making
- decision-tree
- de facto
- defecate
- defence
- defensible, defensive
- demise
- de novo
- dependant (n.)
- dependent (adj.)
- depository (person)
- depository (library, place)
- deprecate (disapprove)
- depreciate (belittle, diminish in value)
- dermatotropic (*not* dermatropic)
- desensitize
- desiccate
- device (n.)
- devise (v.)
- dialyse
- diarrhoea
- dietitian (*not* dietician)
- dilatation (medical)
- dilation (verbal)
- diphosphate
- diphtheria (*not* diptheria)

- Diptera  
 dipterous (insects)  
 Director-General (of WHO)  
 disassemble (take to pieces)  
 disc (*but* computer disk)  
 discolour, discoloration  
 discreet (unobtrusive)  
 discrete (distinct, separate)  
 disguise  
 disinsection (*not* disinsectization)  
 disinterested (impartial; *compare* uninterested)  
 disk (computer), diskette  
 disorganize  
 dispatch (*not* despatch)  
 dissemble (conceal)  
 dissociate (*not* disassociate)  
 divers (several, various)  
 diverse (different, divergent)  
 dizygotic  
 domiciliary  
 Down syndrome (*not* Down's; *also* trisomy 21)  
 Dr (*not* Dr.)  
 dracunculiasis (= guinea-worm disease; *avoid* dracontiasis)  
 draft, draftsman (of texts)  
 draught (air), draughtsman (of drawings)  
 drier (comp. adj.)  
 drinking-water (*but* International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade)  
 drop out (v.)  
 drop-out (n.)  
 drug resistant (*but* drug-resistant parasite)  
 dryer (machine)  
 dysentery, dysenteric  
 dysmenorrhoea  
 dyspnoea, dyspnoeic
- E**
- earmark (n. and v.)  
 eastern blot (*compare* Southern blot, eponymous)  
 eastern Europe (geographical)  
 Eastern Mediterranean Region (of WHO)
- e-commerce  
 Economic and Social Council (of the United Nations) (*not* ECOSOC)  
 economize  
 e.g. (no comma following the final full point)  
 elastomer, elastomeric  
 electron microscope  
 electron microscopy  
 electronvolt (symbol = eV)  
 élite  
 e-mail  
 embarrassment  
 empirical (*not* empiric)  
 emphasize  
 employee  
 enclose (*not* inclose)  
 end-point  
 end-product  
 en masse  
 enquire, enquiry (*not* inquire, inquiry)  
 enrol, enrolled, enrolment  
 en route  
 ensure (make sure; *compare* insure, assure)  
 enterocolitis  
 enterprise  
 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) (*not* ... immuno-absorbent; *not* Elisa)  
 eosinophilia  
 equalize  
 erratum (*pl.* errata)  
 estrogen (*not* oestrogen)  
 estrous (adj.)  
 estrus (n.)  
 et al.  
 etc.  
 etiology (*not* aetiology)  
 euro (*pl.* euros) (currency)  
 European Region (of WHO)  
 evaporating-dish  
 everyday (adj.)  
 every one (of several)  
 everyone (everybody)  
 expipient  
 excreta (treat as plural)  
 exercise  
 exfoliative  
 ex officio

expertise  
extra-articular  
extrabudgetary  
extracellular  
extrahepatic  
extrapulmonary  
extravascular

## F

fact-finding  
faecal, faeces  
fait accompli  
falciparum malaria (*but Plasmodium falciparum*)  
fall out (v.)  
fallout (n.)  
false-negative, false-positive (reaction, result)  
far-reaching  
favour, favourable  
federal (authorities, etc.; in general contexts)  
Federal (with specific titles and names)  
feed (for animals)  
feed back (v.)  
feedback (n.)  
feldsher  
fetal, fetus  
fibre (*not* fiber)  
fibroma  
field test (n.)  
field-test (v.)  
field trial  
fieldwork  
filter  
filter-paper  
finalize  
fine-tooth comb (*not* fine tooth-comb)  
finger-prick (n. and adj.)  
first aid (*but* first-aid kit)  
First World War (*not* World War I)  
flammable (*prefer* to inflammable)  
flowchart  
flowsheet  
focus, focused, focusing  
follow up (v.)  
follow-up (n. and adj.)  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (*not* ... Agricul-

tural; *do not omit* “of the United Nations”)  
foodborne  
food-chain  
food-rule  
foodstuff (for people)  
food value  
foothold  
footnote  
forbear (v.; refrain from)  
forebear (n.; ancestor)  
forebrain  
forego (precede)  
foregone (conclusion)  
foreseeable  
forever  
foreword (preface)  
forgo (go without)  
formalize  
format, formatted, formatting (*compare* combat)  
forum (*pl.* forums)  
formula (*pl.* formulae (scientific), formulas)  
forward (adj.)  
forwards (adv., onward)  
fourfold (*but* 4-fold)  
framboesia  
franchise (n. and v.)  
freezing-point  
fresh water (n.)  
freshwater (adj.)  
front-line health workers  
fuel, fuelled, fuelling  
fulfil, fulfilled, fulfilment  
fulminant

## G

$\gamma$ -isomer (*not* gamma isomer)  
*g* (gravity; e.g. 3.5*g*)  
gas-gangrene  
gastrectomy  
gastroenteritis  
gastrointestinal  
gauge (n. and v.; *not* guage)  
General Service category (of staff)  
generalization  
generalize  
genetic (*not* genetical)

- genitourinary  
 genomic (adj.)  
 genomics (n.)  
 genotyping  
 genus (*pl.* genera)  
 geographical (*not* geographic)  
 geriatric (concerns health and welfare of the elderly, *not* a synonym for aged or senile)  
 giardiasis  
 glasnost  
 globalize  
 goitre (*not* goiter)  
 gonococcal  
 gonococcus (*not* *Gonococcus*; *see* *Neisseria*)  
 goodwill  
 gorilla  
 government (in general contexts)  
 Government (of a particular country)  
 gram (g) (*not* gramme)  
 Gram-positive/negative  
 granddaughter, grandchild, etc.  
 grass roots (*but* grass-roots campaign)  
 gray (radiation unit; symbol = Gy)  
 green belt  
 grey (colour; *not* gray)  
 gross domestic product (spell out)  
 gross national product (spell out)  
 groundnut  
 groundwater (n. and adj.)  
 growth chart  
 growth curve  
 growth rate  
 guerrilla  
 guidelines  
 guinea-pig  
 guinea-worm disease (= dracunculiasis)  
 gynaecological, gynaecology  
 gynaecomastia
- H**
- haematocrit (use erythrocyte volume fraction)  
 haematological, haematology  
 haematopoietic (*not* haemopoietic)  
 haematuria  
 haemodialysis  
 haemoglobin
- Haemophilus influenzae* type b  
 haemoptysis  
 haemorrhage, haemorrhagic  
 haemorrhoids  
 half-hour (*but* half an hour)  
 half-yearly  
 handbook  
 handful(s)  
 handicap, handicapped, handicapping  
 harass, harassment  
 harmonize  
 headquarters (of WHO, etc.)  
 health care (*but* health-care provider)  
 health for all (*but* Global Strategy for Health for All)  
 health-for-all (adj.)  
 helminth, helminthiasis  
 hepatotoxic (adj.)  
 hepatotoxicity (n.)  
 herpesvirus(es)  
 heterogeneity, heterogeneous (*not* heterogenous)  
 highlight  
 hilar  
 HIV (*abbr.* for human immunodeficiency virus)  
 HIV-negative, HIV-positive  
 HIV-related  
 home care (*but* home-care programme)  
 homeopath, homeopathy  
 homeostasis  
 home page (two words)  
 homogeneity, homogeneous(ness) (uniform, of the same kind)  
 homogenetic, homogenous, homogeny (of common origin or descent)  
 homogenize (blend; make homogeneous)  
 honorarium (*pl.* honorariums)  
 honorary  
 honour, honourable  
 horsepower  
 hospitalize, hospitalized  
 hotbed (agriculture, intrigue)  
 hot spot  
 housefly  
 human immunodeficiency virus (*abbr.* = HIV)  
 humoral (immunity)  
 humorous

- humour  
 hydatid cyst, hydatidosis  
 hydrocele  
 hydrogen ion (*but* hydrogen-ion concentration)  
 hydrolyse  
 hyperactive, hyperactivity  
 hypercalcaemia  
 hyperkalaemia  
 hypermagnesaemia  
 hypernatraemia  
 hypertension, hypertensive  
 hyperthermia (excessively high body temperature)  
 hypertonic, hypertonicity  
 hyperuraemia  
 hypoactive, hypoactivity  
 hypocalcaemia  
 hypokalaemia  
 hypomagnesaemia  
 hypomyeloid  
 hyponatraemia  
 hypotension, hypotensive  
 hypothermia (excessively low body temperature)  
 hypothesize, hypothesizing, hypothesized, hypothesis
- I**
- i.e. (no comma following the final full point)  
 illegible  
 ill effect  
 ill-health  
 immunize  
 immunochemistry  
 immunocompromised  
 immunodeficiency  
 immunodiagnosis  
 immunological (*not* immunologic)  
 immunomodulation  
 immunosuppressive  
 impracticable (impossible in practice)  
 impractical (not practical)  
 improvise  
 inasmuch as (two words)  
 in camera  
 incommunicado  
 indexes (of texts, etc.)
- indices (mathematical, scientific)  
 induration  
 industrialize  
 ineligible  
 infarct, infarction (of myocardium)  
 inflection (*not* inflexion)  
 infraction (of rules)  
 infrared  
 infrastructure (usually singular)  
 injecting drug users (*not* intravenous drug users)  
 innocuous  
 inoculate, inoculation  
 inoculum  
 inpatient  
 input  
 insanitary (*not* unsanitary)  
 in-service training  
 insignia (plural word)  
 in situ  
 in so far as (four words)  
 install, installed, instalment  
 instil, instilled, instillation  
 insure (against risk; *compare* assure, ensure)  
 interact, interaction  
 interagency  
 inter alia  
 inter-American (*but* Inter-American Development Bank)  
 intercostal  
 intercountry  
 interdepartmental  
 intergovernmental  
 internationalize  
 Internet  
 interracial  
 interregional  
 interrelated, interrelationship  
 intersectoral (*not* intersectorial)  
 intervertebral  
 intifada  
 into (one word)  
 intra-abdominal  
 intra-articular  
 intracellular  
 intracutaneous  
 intradermal  
 intramural  
 intramuscular

- Intranet  
 intraocular  
 intraregional  
 intrauterine  
 intravascular  
 intravenous  
 in vitro  
 in vivo  
 iodinated  
 iodized (*not* iodinized)  
 ionize  
 iron-deficiency anaemia  
 irradiated  
 irreparable (*not* irrepairable)  
 ischaemia, ischaemic  
 isolatable (*not* isolable)  
 isotype
- J**  
—
- jeopardize  
 joule (J)  
 Jr (= Junior)  
 judgement (*but* Judgments of Administrative Tribunal of ILO)  
 juxta-articular
- K**  
—
- Kaposi sarcoma (*not* Kaposi's sarcoma)  
 kerosene  
 keyword  
 khat  
 kilogram (kg)  
 kilojoule (kJ)  
 kilometre (km)  
 kilowatt (kW)  
 knee-jerk (n. and adj.)  
 know-how  
 kwashiorkor  
 kyphosis
- L**  
—
- label, labelled, labelling  
 labour, laborious  
 labour-intensive  
 lacrimal, lacrimate  
 lacuna (*pl.* lacunae)  
 laissez-faire  
 laissez-passer (invariable *sing.* and *pl.*)  
 large-scale (adj.; *but* on a large scale)  
 larva (*pl.* larvae)  
 last-mentioned  
 Latin American (n. and adj.)  
 lay out (v.)  
 layout (n.)  
 learnt (*not* learned)  
 least developed countries  
 legitimize  
 leukaemia  
 leukocyte (*not* leucocyte)  
 leukopenia  
 leukorrhoea  
 liaison  
 licence (n.)  
 license (v.)  
 life-course  
 life-cycle  
 life expectancy  
 lifelong  
 lifespan  
 lifestyle  
 life-support (adj.)  
 life-threatening (adj.)  
 lifetime  
 lightning (the sky is)  
 lightning (the sky is full of)  
 liquefaction (*not* liquifaction)  
 liquefy (*not* liquify)  
 litre (symbol = l, *but prefer* litre where ambiguity may arise)  
 live birth  
 liveborn (adj.)  
 livestock  
 loath (adj.)  
 loathe (v.)  
 localize  
 logbook  
 logistic (*not* logistical)  
 long-distance (adj.; *but* at a long distance)  
 long-sighted (adj.)  
 long-sightedness (n.)  
 long-term (adj.; *but* in the long term)  
 loophole  
 louse-borne  
 low back pain  
 low-cost (adj.; *but* at low cost)  
 lower-case (adj.; *but* in lower case)  
 lowlight

lump-sum reimbursement (*but* as a lump sum)  
 lupoid  
 lying-in hospital (*but* the mother was lying in hospital)  
 lymph glands  
 lymph nodes  
 lyophilize  
 lyse

## M

macroeconomics  
 man-hours, man-months, etc. (*prefer* work-hours, work-months, etc.)  
 man-made  
 manoeuvre, manoeuvrable, manoeuvred (*not* maneuver, etc.)  
 marijuana (*not* marihuana)  
 matrix (*pl.* matrices)  
 maximize  
 may be (v.)  
 maybe (perhaps)  
 meantime (meanwhile)  
 media (plural word; *sing.* medium)  
 media (*pl.* mediae) of blood vessel  
 mediastinal  
 Mediterranean  
 melting-point  
 Member countries (of WHO, etc.)  
 Member States (of WHO, etc.)  
 members of the Executive Board (persons designated by Member States)  
 memorandum (*pl.* memoranda)  
 memorize  
 meninges  
 meningococcal (meningococcal meningitis, *not* *Neisseria* meningitis)  
 meningococcus (*not* *Meningococcus*)  
 meningoencephalitis  
 metabolize, metabolizing, metabolized  
 meter (measuring device)  
 metre (unit of length; symbol = m)  
 microbiological, microbiology  
 microcomputer, microprocessor  
 microculture  
 microeconomics  
 microfiche (*pl.* microfiches)  
 micrometer (measuring device)  
 micrometre (unit of length; symbol =  $\mu\text{m}$ )  
 microorganism  
 microscopy, microscopist  
 midday  
 midpoint  
 miliary  
 millennium (*pl.* millennia)  
 millimetre (mm)  
 minimize  
 misspell, misspelt (*not* misspell, misspelled)  
 mobilize  
 modus operandi  
 modus vivendi  
 molarity (deprecated; *use* mol/litre)  
 mollusc (*not* mollusk)  
 molluscicide (*not* molluscocide)  
 monophosphate  
 monozygotic  
 mortality rate  
 mosquitoes  
 mould, mouldy (*not* mold, moldy)  
 mouthwash  
 Mr (*not* Mr.)  
 Mrs (*not* Mrs.)  
 Ms (*not* Ms.)  
 mucopurulent  
 mucosal  
 mucous (adj.)  
 mucus (n.)  
 Muhammad (*not* Mahomet or Mohammed)  
 multibacillary  
 multidrug  
 multidrug resistant (adj.; *but* multidrug-resistant parasite)  
 multifaceted  
 multifactorial (*not* multifactoral)  
 multilateral  
 multinational  
 multipurpose  
 multisectoral (*not* multisectorial)  
 murine  
 Muslim (*not* Moslem)  
 mycobacteria, mycobacterial

**N**

naive (*not* naïve)  
 nationwide  
 nasopharyngeal  
 naught (nothing; *see also* nought)  
 near by (adv.)  
 nearby (adj.)  
 necrolysis, necrolytic  
 necrosis, necrotic  
 needle-stick (n. and adj.)  
*Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (the gonococcus)  
*Neisseria meningitidis* (the meningococcus)  
 neonatal  
 nephrotoxic, nephrotoxicity  
 neurobiology  
 neuroendocrinological,  
 neuroendocrinology  
 neuron  
 neurophysiology  
 neurotoxic, neurotoxicity  
 neutralize  
 nevertheless (one word)  
 newborn (adj. and abstract *sing. n.*;  
*avoid* newborns – *prefer* neonates)  
*N*-nitroso compounds (always italic  
 cap.)  
 nobody  
 nocardiosis  
 non<sup>-1</sup>  
 noncommittal  
 noncommunicable diseases  
 nonconformist  
 nondescript  
 nonentity  
 nonetheless (one word)  
 nongovernmental organization  
 nonplus  
 non-profit-making  
 nonproprietary  
 non-self-governing  
 nonsense  
 nonserial  
 nonspecific  
 non-wage-earning

no one (no hyphen)  
 normality (*not* normalcy)  
 north-east, north-eastern  
 northern blot (*compare* Southern blot,  
 eponymous)  
 north-west, north-western  
 nought (zero)  
 nystagmus

**O**

occur, occurred, occurrence  
 oculomotor  
 odour, odourless (*but* odorous, odoriferous)  
 oedema, oedematous  
 oesophageal, oesophagus  
 offence (*not* offense)  
 offensive  
 offspring  
 offset  
 offshore  
 old age (*but* old-age pension)  
 omission  
 onchocerciasis  
 oncogenic  
 oncoming (traffic, etc.)  
 one third  
 online  
 ophthalmic, ophthalmology (*not*  
 ophtalmic *or* ophthalmic, etc.)  
 optimize  
 ordinance (legal instrument)  
 ordnance (gunnery and, in the United  
 Kingdom, mapping)  
 organization (in general contexts)  
 Organization (always with an initial  
 capital when referring to WHO;  
 when referring to particular  
 organizations, use their spelling, e.g.  
 Organisation for Economic Co-  
 operation and Development)  
 organize, organizing, organized,  
 organizer  
 organophosphorus compounds (*not*  
 ...phorous)

<sup>1</sup> In general, follow *The concise Oxford dictionary*, whose tendency is to include a hyphen after the prefix. Exceptions to this rule are listed above, including certain words for which the unhyphenated form has been established as the preferred usage within WHO.

organotin  
 orient, oriented (*not* orientate, orientated)  
 orthopaedic(s)  
 osteoarthritis, osteoarthrosis  
 osteomalacia  
 ototoxic, ototoxicity  
 out-of-date (adj.; *but* it is out of date)  
 outpatient  
 output  
 overall (adj., adv. and n.)  
 overemphasize  
 overestimate  
 overpopulated  
 overproduction  
 override  
 overrule  
 overseas (*not* oversea)  
 oversee  
 oversight (inadvertence, supervision)  
 oversimplify, oversimplification  
 overuse (n. and v.)  
 overutilize  
 overview (*prefer* survey, outline, review)  
 oxidize

## P

*P* values (cap. ital.)  
 paediatric(s)  
 Pan American Health Organization  
 Pan American Sanitary Bureau  
 panic, panicked, panicky  
 parallel, paralleled, paralleling  
 paraesthesia  
 paralyse  
 parenchymal  
 parenteral (introduced other than by the alimentary tract)  
 Parkinson disease (*not* Parkinson's), Parkinsonian  
 participate in (*not* at or to)  
 particulate matter  
 pasteurize (no cap.)  
 pathognomic  
 patronize, patronizing, patronized  
 paucibacillary  
 payroll  
 pendant (n.)  
 pendent (adj.)

per annum  
 per capita  
 per cent (*but* % is usual)  
 percentage  
 percentile  
 per diem, per diem allowance (no hyphen)  
 perestroika  
 perinatal  
 periodontal  
 periurban  
 per se  
 Petri dish  
 phagocytose (*not* phagocytize)  
 pharmacogenetics  
 pharmacognosy  
 pharmacopoeia  
 phase out (v.)  
 phasing-out (n.)  
 phenomenon (*pl.* phenomena)  
 phenotyping  
 phosphorous (adj.)  
 phosphorus (n.)  
 physicochemical  
 pièce de résistance  
 pipeline  
 pleuritis  
 pneumococcus, pneumococcal (*not* *Pneumococcus*)  
 pneumothorax  
 policy-maker, policy-making  
 polyclinic  
 polymerase  
 postbasic  
 postmenopausal  
 postmortem (*but* examine the body post mortem)  
 postnatal  
 postoperative  
 postpartum  
 post-session  
 post-test  
 post-treatment  
 postwar (adj. only)  
 potentiate, potentiating, potentiated, potentiation  
 practice (n.)  
 practise (v.)  
 précis, précis-writer  
 precocious

preconceive, preconception  
 precondition  
 prednisolone  
 predominant(ly) (*not* predominate(ly))  
 pre-eclampsia  
 pre-eminent  
 pre-empt, pre-emption, pre-emptive  
 preinvestment  
 premenopausal  
 premise (n. and v.)  
 prenatal  
 preoperative  
 pre-planned  
 pre-pubescent  
 prequalification  
 prerequisite  
 preschool child(ren)  
 presently (in a short while; *for* at present  
*use now or currently*)  
 pre-session  
 pressurize  
 pretest  
 pretreatment  
 preventive (*not* preventative)  
 prewar (adj. only)  
 prima facie  
 primary health worker (*prefer* commu-  
 nity health worker)  
 primary-school child(ren)  
 primary-school teacher  
 principal (chief; n. and adj.)  
 principle (rule of conduct)  
 printout (*but* print out the results)  
 prioritize  
 Professional (category of staff)  
 progestogen (*not* progestagen)  
 program (computers only)  
 programme (all non-computer uses)  
 promise (n. and v.)  
 proofreader  
 propellant (n.)  
 propellent (adj.)  
 pro rata  
 prorata  
 pro tempore  
 provenance (*not* provenience)  
 pruritus  
 psychoactive  
 psychosocial  
 psychotropic

publicize, publicizing, publicized  
 purpura  
 pyogenic

## Q

Q fever  
 quantify  
 questionnaire  
 queue, queued, queuing

## R

raccoon (*not* racoon)  
 radioactive, radioactivity  
 radiodiagnosis  
 radiofrequency  
 radioimmunoassay  
 radioisotope  
 radionuclide  
 radiopacity, radiopaque  
 radiotherapy  
 rainwater (n. and adj.)  
 raison d'être  
 randomize  
 rapporteur  
 rarefy, rarefaction (*not* rarify, rarification)  
 rationalize  
 readmit  
 reagent  
 realize  
 reallocate  
 reappear  
 reassess  
 reclassification, reclassify  
 recognize  
 recover (regain possession; *but* re-cover  
 = cover anew)  
 recreation (leisure; *but* re-create = create  
 anew)  
 redefine  
 re-edit  
 re-educate  
 re-employ  
 re-enter, re-entry  
 re-establish  
 re-examine  
 reflection (*not* reflexion)  
 reform (amend for the better; *but* re-  
 form = form again)

- regime (*not* régime)  
 regimen (therapeutic)  
 region (no cap. in generic or non-formal references: “in three WHO regions”)  
 Region (of WHO) (cap. in specific or formal references: “in the European Region”)  
 Region of the Americas (of WHO; *not* American Region)  
 regional committee (general)  
 Regional Committee for ... (specific region)  
 Regional Director (same practice as for “Region/region” regarding caps)  
 Regional Office (same practice as for “Region/region” regarding caps)  
 regroup  
 reimplantation  
 reinfect, reinfection  
 reinoculate, reinoculation  
 reinstate  
 reinsure  
 rendezvous (no hyphen)  
 renown  
 reopen  
 reorganize  
 repairable (can be mended)  
 reparable (loss can be made good)  
 repellent (n. and adj.)  
 re-route  
 resect, resecting, resected  
 resign (give up office; *but* re-sign = sign again)  
 resist (person)  
 resistor (electrical device)  
 respect (with respect to, in respect of)  
 restructure  
 résumé  
 resuscitate, resuscitator  
 rethink  
 retreat (withdraw; *but* re-treat = treat again)  
 retrobulbar  
 reuse (n. and v.)  
 revise  
 rewrite  
 rickets  
*Rickettsia* (sp.), rickettsiosis (*sing.*), rickettsioses, rickettsial
- rigor (pathology)  
 rigorous  
 rigour (strictness)  
 risk–benefit (ratio)  
 role (*not* rôle)  
 roll-call, roll-call vote  
 rotavirus(es)  
 round table (*but* round-table discussion)
- S**
- sac (biol.)  
 saccharin (the sweetener)  
 saccharine (sweet, sweetly polite)  
 sack (bag, etc.)  
*Salmonella*, salmonellae  
 salt water (n.)  
 saltwater (adj.)  
 salutary  
 sanatorium (*not* sanitarium; *pl.* sanatoria)  
 savannah  
 sceptic, sceptical (*not* skeptic, skeptical)  
*Schistosoma*, schistosome, schistosomiasis  
 schoolchild(ren) (*but* preschool children, primary-school children, secondary-school children)  
 schoolteacher (*but* preschool teacher, primary-school teacher, secondary-school teacher)  
 scrutinize, scrutinizing, scrutinized  
 seabed  
 sea level  
 seat-belt  
 seawater (n. and adj.)  
 Second World War (*not* World War II)  
 secretariat (in all generic references to staff)  
 Secretariat (cap. only when referring to WHO: Health Assembly, Executive Board, Secretariat)  
 Secretary-General (of the United Nations)  
 sectoral (*not* sectorial)  
 self-care  
 self-esteem  
 self-funded  
 semi-arid  
 semiquantitative

- sensationalize  
 sensitize, sensitizing, sensitized,  
     sensitization  
 sensu stricto  
 septic (tank, etc.)  
 seroconvert  
 serodiagnosis  
 seronegative, seronegativity  
 seropositive, seropositivity  
 seroprevalence  
 serostatus  
 set back (v.)  
 setback (n.)  
 set up (v.)  
 set-up (n.)  
 sew, sewed, sewn (with thread)  
 sewage (the substance)  
 sewerage (the works)  
 sharecropper  
 shelf-life  
 shellfish  
 shiftwork, shiftworker  
*Shigella* (pl. shigellae)  
 shigellosis  
 shortlist (n. and v.)  
 short-sighted (adj.), short-sightedness  
     (n.)  
 short-term (adj.; *but* in the short term)  
 sickbed  
 sick leave  
 sickle-cell anaemia  
 side-effects  
 sideroblastic  
 sine qua non  
 siphon (*not* syphon)  
 skilful, skilfully, skilfulness  
 sleeping sickness  
 smallpox  
 small-scale (adj.; *but* on a small scale)  
 snake-bite  
 soakaway  
 so-called (adj.; *but* it is properly so  
     called)  
 sociocultural  
 socioeconomic  
 some time (at some time)  
 sometime (formerly)  
 sometimes  
 sorption  
 south-east, south-eastern  
 South-East Asia Region (of WHO)  
 Southern blot (eponymous *but* eastern  
     blot, northern blot, western blot)  
 south-west, south-western  
 sow, sowed, sown (seeds, etc.)  
 specialize  
 spectrum (pl. spectra)  
 spelt (*not* spelled)  
 spirometry  
 spoon-feeding, spoon-feed, spoon-fed  
 spoonful(s)  
 stabilize  
 standardize  
 starting-point  
 state (used adjectivally and when  
     referring generally to federated  
     units: “the Indian states”)  
 State (n.; country (when specified),  
     Member States and when the word  
     is part of the official title of a  
     federated State: “New York State”,  
     *but* “13 states of the United States of  
     America”)  
 stationary (at rest)  
 stationery (paper, etc.)  
 status quo  
 sterilize  
 stigmatize  
 stillbirth (n.)  
 stillborn (adj. only)  
 stockpile (v.)  
 storey (of building)  
 straight away (at once)  
 straightforward  
 straitjacket  
 strait-laced  
 strait(s) (narrow passage of water)  
 stratum (pl. strata)  
*Streptococcus* (pl. streptococci)  
 streptococcal  
 stumbling block  
 sub-account  
 subcategory  
 subclass  
 subclause  
 subcommittee  
 subconscious  
 subcutaneous  
 subdivide, subdivision  
 subfamily

- subgroup  
 subitem  
 sublethal  
 suboptimal  
 subparagraph  
 subprogramme  
 subregion, subregional  
 sub-Saharan  
 sub-Saharan  
 subsample  
 subsection  
 subsidize  
 subsoil  
 substandard  
 subsystem  
 subtitle  
 subtotal  
 subtropical, subtropics  
 subunit  
 sugar-beet  
 sugar-cane  
 sulfa... (*not* sulpha...)  
 sulfi... (*not* sulphi...)  
 sulfo... (*not* sulpho...) (sulfonamides, sulfone, etc.)  
 sulfur (*not* sulphur)  
 summarize  
 supersede (*not* supercede)  
 supervise  
 supervisor (*not* superviser)  
 surprise (n. and v.)  
 surveillance  
 syllabus (*pl.* syllabuses)  
 symposium (*pl.* symposia or symposiums)  
 synthesize (*not* synthesize)  
 syringe
- T**
- target, targeted, targeting  
 teamwork  
 teaspoon, teaspoonful(s)  
 teleconference  
 televise  
 template (*not* templet)  
 teratogen, teratogenic  
 test-tube  
 textbook  
 text processing, text processor (*prefer*  
     word processing, word processor)  
 thermonuclear  
 thermostable, thermostability  
 thoracoplasty  
 thrombocytopenia, thrombocytopenic  
 through (*not* thru)  
 tick-borne  
 time-limit  
 timescale  
 timetable  
 tinnitus  
 tire (v.; become or cause to become in  
     need of rest or sleep)  
 title page  
 time frame  
 titre (*not* titer)  
 tomography  
 tonne (*not* “metric ton” or “metric  
     tonne”)  
 topsoil  
 total, totalled, totalling  
 towards (*not* toward)  
 traffic, trafficker, trafficking  
 tranquilize, tranquilizer  
 transaminase  
 transcriptase  
 transnational  
 transplacental  
 travel, travelled, travelling  
 triphosphate  
 trisomy 21 (Down syndrome)  
*Trypanosoma*, trypanosome,  
     trypanosomiasis, trypanosomal  
 tsetse fly  
 tuberculous  
 tumefaction, tumefy  
 tumour, tumorigenic  
 turn out (v.)  
 turnout (n.)  
 turn over (v.)  
 turnover (n.)  
 twofold (*but* 2-fold)  
 two thirds  
 typesetting  
 tyre (n.)

**U**

ultrafiltration  
 ultra-low-volume formulations (*abbr.* = ULV)  
 ultramicroscopic  
 ultraspecific  
 ultraviolet  
 unbiased  
 uncooperative  
 uncoordinated  
 underdeveloped  
 underemphasize  
 underestimate  
 undergraduate  
 underprivileged  
 underrate  
 underreport, underreporting  
 underserved (insufficiently served)  
 underuse (n. and v.)  
 underutilize  
 under way (*not* underway)  
 underweight  
 undeserved (unmerited)  
 unequivocal, unequivocally (*not* unequivocable, unequivocably)  
 UNESCO (caps; *but* Unesco Press)  
 UNICEF (caps)  
 uninterested (*not* interested; *compare* disinterested)  
 update  
 upper-case (adj.; *but* in upper case)  
 up-to-date (adj.; *but* it is up to date)  
 urine analysis (*not* urinalysis)  
 usable  
 usage  
 utilize

**V**

vapour, vaporize, vaporizer  
 Vaseline (trade name, requires cap.; *prefer* petroleum jelly)  
 vasodilator  
 vasomotor  
 vector-borne  
 venepuncture (*not* venipuncture)  
 venesection  
 ventrolateral  
 verbatim

versus (*abbr.* = vs)  
 vestibular  
 via  
 vice-chairman, etc.  
 vice versa  
 victimize  
 video cassette  
 videoconference, videoconferencing  
 vigour, vigorous  
 viral  
 virile  
 vis-à-vis  
 visualize  
 vitamin A, etc. (*not* Vitamin A, etc.)  
 viva voce  
 viz. (*prefer* namely)  
 vulvovaginitis

**W**

wage-earner, wage-earning  
 waive (the rules; *compare* wave)  
 waiver (n.; relinquishing a right; *compare* waver)  
 wastewater  
 water-bath  
 waterborne  
 watercourse  
 water table  
 waterworks  
 wave (the flag; *compare* waive)  
 wavelength  
 waver (v.; falter; *compare* waiver)  
 weal (*not* wheel)  
 web (*but* the World Wide Web)  
 web page  
 web site  
 weekday  
 weekend  
 well-baby clinic  
 well-being  
 well-water  
 western (geographical)  
 western blot (*compare* Southern blot, eponymous)  
 Western Pacific Region (of WHO)  
 wet-nurse  
 while (*not* whilst)  
 whooping cough (*prefer* pertussis)  
 widespread (adj.)

wildlife  
wilful  
-wise (as suffix, avoid if possible)  
word processing, word processor, etc.  
workforce  
work-hours  
workload  
work-months  
workplace  
workplan  
worksheet  
workshop  
World Health Assembly (may be  
shortened to Health Assembly, *not*  
to Assembly)  
World Health Organization (*not*  
Organisation)  
worldwide (adj. and adv.)  
World Wide Web  
worthwhile (adj.; *but* it is well worth  
while)

## **XYZ**

X-ray (*not* x-ray)  
xerography  
xerophilic  
xerophthalmia (*not* xerophthalmia *or*  
xerophthalmia)  
Xerox (trade name, requires cap.; *prefer*  
photocopy)  
yearbook  
yeasts  
yellow fever  
zoonosis (*pl.* zoonoses), zoonotic

## 6. Words ending in -ize, -ise and -yse

Where there is a choice between using the suffix *-ize* or *-ise* (e.g. organize or organise), *-ize*, derived from the Greek “-izo”, is preferred, consistent with the first spelling of such words given in *The concise Oxford dictionary*. For some words, such as surprise, comprise or improvise, where *-ise* is not a suffix but part of the root of the word, there is no choice and *-ise* must be used. Similarly, *-yse* must be used for words derived from the Greek *lysis* (= lysis), as in analyse, dialyse and hydrolyse.

### -ize

acclimatize	harmonize	pressurize
aggrandize	homogenize	prioritize
agonize	hospitalize	publicize
alphabetize	hypothesize	
amortize		randomize
anabolize	immunize	rationalize
anglicize	industrialize	realize
anodize	internationalize	recognize
antagonize	ionize	reorganize
apologize		
apostrophize	jeopardize	scrutinize
appetize	legitimize	sensationalize
authorize	localize	sensitize
	lyophilize	specialize
capitalize		stabilize
categorize	maximize	standardize
centralize	memorize	sterilize
computerize	metabolize	stigmatize
criticize	minimize	subsidize
	mobilize	summarize
decentralize		synthesize
desensitize	neutralize	
disorganize		tranquillize
	optimize	
economize	organize	underemphasize
emphasize	overemphasize	underutilize
equalize	overutilize	utilize
	oxidize	
finalize		vaporize
formalize	pasteurize	victimize
	patronize	visualize
generalize		
globalize		

**-ise**

advertise  
advise (v., *but* advice n.)  
apprise  
  
comprise  
compromise  
  
demise  
devise (v., *but* device n.)  
disguise  
  
enterprise  
exercise (v. and n.)  
expertise  
  
franchise (v. and n.)  
  
improvise  
  
practise (v., *but* practice n.)  
premise (v. and n.)  
promise (v. and n.)  
  
revise  
  
supervise  
surprise (v. and n.)  
  
televise

**-yse**

analyse  
catalyse  
  
dialyse  
hydrolyse  
  
lyse  
  
paralyse

# 7. Abbreviations<sup>1</sup>

## Abbreviations used in the medical sciences

The following abbreviations are in common use in the medical sciences and in WHO publications.

Ab	antibody
Ag	antigen
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ARI	acute respiratory infection
BCG	bacille Calmette–Guérin (vaccine)
BMI	body mass index
BMR	basal metabolic rate
BOD	biochemical oxygen demand
BP	blood pressure
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CAT	computerized axial tomography
CHD	coronary heart disease
CJD	Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease
CNS	central nervous system
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid
CVD	cardiovascular disease
DALE	disability-adjusted life expectancy
DALY	disability-adjusted life year
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
DOTS	directly observed treatment, short-course
DTH	delayed-type hypersensitivity
DTP	diphtheria–tetanus–pertussis vaccine
ECG	electrocardiogram, electrocardiography
ECT	electroconvulsive therapy
ED <sub>50</sub>	median effective dose
EEG	electroencephalogram, electroencephalography
ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
ESR	erythrocyte sedimentation rate
F <sub>1</sub>	first filial generation

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<sup>1</sup> All abbreviations should be defined and spelt out the first time that they are used; the abbreviation should be placed in parentheses after the definition. For further information, see section 2, “Abbreviations”.

GABA	gamma-aminobutyric acid
GFR	glomerular filtration rate
GLC	gas-liquid chromatography
Hb	haemoglobin
HBV	<i>Hepatitis B virus</i> (not hepatitis B vaccine, which should be spelt out)
HDL	high-density lipoprotein (cholesterol)
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HPLC	high-performance liquid chromatography
HRT	hormone replacement therapy
HTLV	human T-cell lymphotropic virus
Ig	immunoglobulin (IgA, IgD, IgE, IgG, IgM)
IL	interleukin
IR	infrared
IUD	intrauterine device
LD <sub>50</sub>	median lethal dose
LDL	low-density lipoprotein (cholesterol)
MAb	monoclonal antibody
MHC	major histocompatibility complex
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
NMR	nuclear magnetic resonance
NSAID	non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
PCV	packed cell volume
QALY	quality-adjusted life year
RNA	ribonucleic acid
SARS	severe acute respiratory syndrome
SDS-PAGE	sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
sp., spp.	species ( <i>sing.</i> and <i>pl.</i> abbreviations)
STD	sexually transmitted disease
STI	sexually transmitted infection
TB	tuberculosis
TLC	thin-layer chromatography
TNF	tumour necrosis factor
TSE	transmissible spongiform encephalopathy
UV	ultraviolet
YLD	years lived with a disability

### **Names of organizations**

The following abbreviations of international and other organizations are those most frequently encountered within WHO.

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination
ACHR	Advisory Committee on Health Research
AGFUND	Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIOMS	Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EC	European Commission, European Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EEC	European Economic Community
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FICSA	Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IARC	International Agency for Research on Cancer
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICDO	International Civil Defence Organization
ICMMP	International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDA	International Development Association (World Bank)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization (Office)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (The Fund)
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITO	International Trade Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for International Development
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	International Office of Epizootics
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization

PASB	Pan American Sanitary Bureau
SAREC	Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UICC	International Union against Cancer
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRO	Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFDAC	United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCEAR	United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation
UPU	Universal Postal Union
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCC	World Council of Churches
WFP	World Food Programme
WFUNA	World Federation of United Nations Associations
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

### **Abbreviations used in addresses**

The following abbreviations are in common use in WHO publications.

#### **States and territories of Australia**

Australian Capital Territory	ACT	South Australia	SA
New South Wales	NSW	Tasmania	Tas.
Northern Territory	NT	Victoria	Vic.
Queensland	Qld.	Western Australia	WA

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

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**Provinces of Canada**

Alberta	AB	Nunavut	NU
British Columbia	BC	Ontario	ON
Manitoba	MB	Prince Edward Island	PE
New Brunswick	NB	Quebec	QC
Newfoundland	NF	Saskatchewan	SK
Northwest Territories	NT	Yukon Territory	YT
Nova Scotia	NS		

**States, territories and districts of the United States of America**

Alabama	AL	Montana	MT
Alaska	AK	Nebraska	NE
Arizona	AZ	Nevada	NV
Arkansas	AR	New Hampshire	NH
California	CA	New Jersey	NJ
Canal Zone	CZ	New Mexico	NM
Colorado	CO	New York	NY
Connecticut	CT	North Carolina	NC
Delaware	DE	North Dakota	ND
District of Columbia	DC	Ohio	OH
Florida	FL	Oklahoma	OK
Georgia	GA	Oregon	OR
Hawaii	HI	Pennsylvania	PA
Idaho	ID	Puerto Rico	PR
Illinois	IL	Rhode Island	RI
Indiana	IN	South Carolina	SC
Iowa	IA	South Dakota	SD
Kansas	KS	Tennessee	TN
Kentucky	KY	Texas	TX
Louisiana	LA	Utah	UT
Maine	ME	Vermont	VT
Maryland	MD	Virginia	VA
Massachusetts	MA	Washington (State)	WA
Michigan	MI	West Virginia	WV
Minnesota	MN	Wisconsin	WI
Mississippi	MS	Wyoming	WY
Missouri	MO		



## 8. Member States and Associate Members of WHO<sup>1,2</sup>

(updated 22 July 2003)

<b>Short name<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Afghanistan	the Islamic State of Afghanistan	Afghan	Kabul
Albania	the Republic of Albania	Albanian	Tirana
Algeria	the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria	Algerian	Algiers
Andorra	the Principality of Andorra	Andorran	Andorra La Vella
Angola	the Republic of Angola	Angolan	Luanda
Antigua and Barbuda	Antigua and Barbuda	of Antigua and Barbuda	St John's
Argentina	the Argentine Republic	Argentine	Buenos Aires
Armenia	the Republic of Armenia	Armenian	Yerevan
Australia	Australia	Australian	Canberra
Austria	the Republic of Austria	Austrian	Vienna
Azerbaijan	the Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijani	Baku
Bahamas (the)	the Commonwealth of the Bahamas	Bahamian	Nassau
Bahrain	the Kingdom of Bahrain	Bahraini	Manama
Bangladesh	the People's Republic of Bangladesh	(of) Bangladesh, a Bangladeshi	Dhaka
Barbados	Barbados	Barbadian	Bridgetown

<sup>1</sup> This list is valid as of 22 July 2003, but LEG should be consulted for information on more recent changes and additions. The listing of capital cities is provided for general information purposes; however, it cannot be relied upon as authoritative. The United Nations, which is the source of information for this list, does not maintain an official list of capital cities. See also section 2, "Member States".

<sup>2</sup> Information on the regional distribution of Member States and Associate Members may be found on the WHO-HQ Intranet (see also section 2, "Structure of WHO").

<sup>3</sup> It is generally acceptable to use the short name in WHO publications; see also section 2, "Member States".

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Belarus	the Republic of Belarus	Belarusian	Minsk
Belgium	the Kingdom of Belgium	Belgian	Brussels
Belize	Belize	Belizean	Belmopan
Benin	the Republic of Benin	Beninese	Porto-Novo <sup>1</sup>
Bhutan	the Kingdom of Bhutan	Bhutanese	Thimphu
Bolivia	the Republic of Bolivia	Bolivian	Sucre <sup>2</sup>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	(of) Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo
Botswana	the Republic of Botswana	(of) Botswana	Gaborone
Brazil	the Federative Republic of Brazil	Brazilian	Brasília
Brunei Darussalam	Brunei Darussalam	(of) Brunei Darussalam	Bandar Seri Begawan
Bulgaria	the Republic of Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Sofia
Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso	(of) Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou
<i>Burma: see Myanmar</i>			
Burundi	the Republic of Burundi	(of) Burundi, Burundian	Bujumbura
Cambodia	the Kingdom of Cambodia	Cambodian	Phnom Penh
Cameroon	the Republic of Cameroon	Cameroonian	Yaoundé
Canada	Canada	Canadian	Ottawa
Cape Verde	the Republic of Cape Verde	Cape Verdean	Praia
Central African Republic (the)	the Central African Republic	of the Central African Republic, Central African	Bangui
Chad	the Republic of Chad	Chadian	N'Djamena
Chile	the Republic of Chile	Chilean	Santiago
China	the People's Republic of China	Chinese	Beijing
Colombia	the Republic of Colombia	Colombian	Bogotá

<sup>1</sup> Seat of Government: Cotonou.

<sup>2</sup> Seat of Government: La Paz.

**MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF WHO**

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Comoros (the)	the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros	Comorian	Moroni
Congo (the)	the Republic of the Congo	Congolese	Brazzaville
Cook Islands	the Cook Islands	of the Cook Islands	Avarua
Costa Rica	the Republic of Costa Rica	Costa Rican	San José
Côte d'Ivoire	the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire	Ivorian	Yamoussoukro <sup>1</sup>
Croatia	the Republic of Croatia	Croatian	Zagreb
Cuba	the Republic of Cuba	Cuban	Havana
Cyprus	the Republic of Cyprus	Cypriot	Nicosia
Czech Republic (the)	the Czech Republic	Czech	Prague
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the)	the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Pyongyang
Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)	the Democratic Republic of the Congo	of the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kinshasa
Denmark	the Kingdom of Denmark	Danish, a Dane	Copenhagen
Djibouti	the Republic of Djibouti	(of) Djibouti, a Djiboutian	Djibouti
Dominica	the Commonwealth of Dominica	(of) Dominica	Roseau
Dominican Republic (the)	the Dominican Republic	Dominican	Santo Domingo
Ecuador	the Republic of Ecuador	Ecuadorian	Quito
Egypt	the Arab Republic of Egypt	Egyptian	Cairo
El Salvador	the Republic of El Salvador	Salvadoran	San Salvador
Equatorial Guinea	the Republic of Equatorial Guinea	(of) Equatorial Guinea	Malabo
Eritrea	Eritrea	Eritrean	Asmara
Estonia	the Republic of Estonia	Estonian	Tallinn
Ethiopia	the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Ethiopian	Addis Ababa

<sup>1</sup> Seat of Government: Abidjan.

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Fiji	the Republic of Fiji	Fijian	Suva
Finland	the Republic of Finland	Finnish, a Finn	Helsinki
France	the French Republic	French, the French	Paris
Gabon	the Gabonese Republic	Gabonese	Libreville
Gambia (the)	the Republic of the Gambia	Gambian	Banjul
Georgia	Georgia	Georgian	Tbilisi
Germany	the Federal Republic of Germany	German	Berlin
Ghana	the Republic of Ghana	Ghanaian	Accra
Greece	the Hellenic Republic	Greek	Athens
Grenada	Grenada	Grenadian	St George's
Guatemala	the Republic of Guatemala	Guatemalan	Guatemala City
Guinea	the Republic of Guinea	Guinean	Conakry
Guinea-Bissau	the Republic of Guinea-Bissau	(of) Guinea-Bissau	Bissau
Guyana	the Republic of Guyana	Guyanese	Georgetown
Haiti	the Republic of Haiti	Haitian	Port-au-Prince
Honduras	the Republic of Honduras	Honduran	Tegucigalpa
Hungary	the Republic of Hungary	Hungarian	Budapest
Iceland	the Republic of Iceland	Icelandic, an Icelander	Reykjavik
India	the Republic of India	Indian	New Delhi
Indonesia	the Republic of Indonesia	Indonesian	Jakarta
Iran (Islamic Republic of) <sup>1</sup>	the Islamic Republic of Iran	Iranian	Tehran
Iraq	the Republic of Iraq	Iraqi	Baghdad
Ireland	Ireland	Irish, the Irish	Dublin
Israel	the State of Israel	Israeli	
Italy	the Republic of Italy	Italian	Rome
<i>Ivory Coast (the): see Côte d'Ivoire</i>			

<sup>1</sup> For purposes other than alphabetical lists, tables and name-plates, the following form should be used: the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF WHO**

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Jamaica	Jamaica	Jamaican	Kingston
Japan	Japan	Japanese	Tokyo
Jordan	the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Jordanian	Amman
Kazakhstan	the Republic of Kazakhstan	Kazakh	Astana
Kenya	the Republic of Kenya	Kenyan	Nairobi
Kiribati	Kiribati	of Kiribati	Tarawa
<i>Korea: see Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the), and Republic of Korea (the)</i>			
Kuwait	the State of Kuwait	Kuwaiti	Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan	the Kyrgyz Republic	Kyrgyz	Bishkek
Lao People's Democratic Republic (the)	the Lao People's Democratic Republic	Lao, a Lao, the Lao <sup>1</sup>	Vientiane
Latvia	the Republic of Latvia	Latvian	Riga
Lebanon	the Lebanese Republic	Lebanese	Beirut
Lesotho	the Kingdom of Lesotho	(of) Lesotho	Maseru
Liberia	the Republic of Liberia	Liberian	Monrovia
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (the)	the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Libyan	Tripoli
Lithuania	the Republic of Lithuania	Lithuanian	Vilnius
Luxembourg	the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	(of) Luxembourg	Luxembourg
<i>Macedonia: see The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</i>			
Madagascar	the Republic of Madagascar	Malagasy	Antananarivo
Malawi	the Republic of Malawi	Malawian	Lilongwe
Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysian	Kuala Lumpur
Maldives	the Republic of Maldives	Maldivian	Malé
Mali	the Republic of Mali	Malian	Bamako
Malta	the Republic of Malta	Maltese	Valletta
Marshall Islands (the)	the Republic of the Marshall Islands	of the Marshall Islands, Marshallese	Majuro

<sup>1</sup> "Lao" is invariable, both as an adjective and as a noun, in English, French and Spanish.

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Mauritania	the Islamic Republic of Mauritania	Mauritanian	Nouakchott
Mauritius	the Republic of Mauritius	Mauritian	Port Louis
Mexico	the United Mexican States	Mexican	Mexico City
Micronesia (Federated States of) <sup>1</sup>	the Federated States of Micronesia	of the Federated States of Micronesia	Palikir
<i>Moldova: see Republic of Moldova (the)</i>			
Monaco	the Principality of Monaco	Monegasque	Monaco
Mongolia	Mongolia	Mongolian	Ulaanbaatar
Morocco	the Kingdom of Morocco	Moroccan	Rabat
Mozambique	the Republic of Mozambique	Mozambican	Maputo
Myanmar	the Union of Myanmar	of Myanmar	Yangon
Namibia	the Republic of Namibia	Namibian	Windhoek
Nauru	the Republic of Nauru	Nauruan	Yaren District
Nepal	the Kingdom of Nepal	Nepalese	Kathmandu
Netherlands (the)	the Kingdom of the Netherlands	Dutch, the Dutch	Amsterdam <sup>2</sup>
New Zealand	New Zealand	(of) New Zealand, a New Zealander	Wellington
Nicaragua	the Republic of Nicaragua	Nicaraguan	Managua
Niger (the)	the Republic of the Niger	(of the) Niger	Niamey
Nigeria	the Federal Republic of Nigeria	Nigerian	Abuja
Niue	the Republic of Niue	of Niue	Alofi
Norway	the Kingdom of Norway	Norwegian	Oslo
Oman	the Sultanate of Oman	Omani	Muscat
Pakistan	the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	(of) Pakistan, a Pakistani	Islamabad
Palau	the Republic of Palau	of Palau	Koror
Panama	the Republic of Panama	Panamanian	Panama City

<sup>1</sup> For purposes other than alphabetical lists, tables and name-plates, the following form should be used: the Federated States of Micronesia.

<sup>2</sup> Seat of Government: The Hague.

**MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF WHO**

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Papua New Guinea	Papua New Guinea	(of) Papua New Guinea, a Papua New Guinean	Port Moresby
Paraguay	the Republic of Paraguay	Paraguayan	Asunción
Peru	the Republic of Peru	Peruvian	Lima
Philippines (the)	the Republic of the Philippines	Philippine, the Filipinos	Manila
Poland	the Republic of Poland	Polish, a Pole	Warsaw
Portugal	the Portuguese Republic	Portuguese	Lisbon
Puerto Rico <sup>1</sup>	Puerto Rico	Puerto Rican	San Juan
Qatar	the State of Qatar	(of) Qatar	Doha
Republic of Korea (the)	the Republic of Korea	of the Republic of Korea	Seoul
Republic of Moldova (the)	the Republic of Moldova	Moldovan	Chisinau
Romania	Romania	Romanian	Bucharest
Russian Federation (the)	the Russian Federation	of the Russian Federation, Russian	Moscow
Rwanda	the Rwandese Republic	Rwandan	Kigali
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Saint Kitts and Nevis	of Saint Kitts and Nevis	Basseterre
Saint Lucia	Saint Lucia	Saint Lucian	Castries
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Kingstown
Samoa	the Independent State of Samoa	Samoan	Apia
San Marino	the Republic of San Marino	(of) San Marino	San Marino
Sao Tome and Principe	the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe	of Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome
Saudi Arabia	the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabian	Riyadh
Senegal	the Republic of Senegal	Senegalese	Dakar
Serbia and Montenegro	Serbia and Montenegro	of Serbia and Montenegro	Belgrade

<sup>1</sup> Associate Member.

WHO STYLE GUIDE

Short name	Full name	Adjective/People	Capital city
Seychelles	the Republic of Seychelles	(of) Seychelles, a Seychellois	Victoria
Sierra Leone	the Republic of Sierra Leone	Sierra Leonean	Freetown
Singapore	the Republic of Singapore	Singaporean	
Slovakia	the Slovak Republic	Slovak	Bratislava
Slovenia	the Republic of Slovenia	Slovene	Ljubljana
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	(of) Solomon Islands	Honiara
Somalia	the Somali Democratic Republic	Somali	Mogadishu
South Africa	the Republic of South Africa	South African	Pretoria
Spain	the Kingdom of Spain	Spanish, a Spaniard	Madrid
Sri Lanka	the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	(of) Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan	Sri Jayawardenepura
Sudan (the)	the Republic of the Sudan	Sudanese	Khartoum
Suriname	the Republic of Suriname	Surinamese	Paramaribo
Swaziland	the Kingdom of Swaziland	Swazi	Mbabane
Sweden	the Kingdom of Sweden	Swedish, a Swede	Stockholm
Switzerland	the Swiss Confederation	Swiss	Berne
Syrian Arab Republic (the)	the Syrian Arab Republic	Syrian	Damascus
<i>Tanzania: see United Republic of Tanzania (the)</i>			
Tajikistan	the Republic of Tajikistan	Tajik	Dushanbe
Thailand	the Kingdom of Thailand	Thai	Bangkok
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Skopje
Timor-Leste	the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste	of Timor-Leste	Dili
Togo	the Togolese Republic	Togolese	Lomé
Tokelau <sup>1</sup>	Tokelau	of Tokelau	
Tonga	the Kingdom of Tonga	Tongan	Nuku'alofa
Trinidad and Tobago	the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago	of Trinidad and Tobago	Port-of-Spain

<sup>1</sup> Associate Member.

**MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF WHO**

<b>Short name</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Adjective/People</b>	<b>Capital city</b>
Tunisia	the Republic of Tunisia	Tunisian	Tunis
Turkey	the Republic of Turkey	Turkish, a Turk	Ankara
Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan	Turkmen	Ashkhabat
Tuvalu	Tuvalu	Tuvaluan	Funafuti
Uganda	the Republic of Uganda	Ugandan	Kampala
Ukraine	Ukraine	Ukrainian	Kiev
United Arab Emirates (the)	the United Arab Emirates	of the United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the) <sup>1</sup>	the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	(of the) United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), British	London
United Republic of Tanzania (the)	the United Republic of Tanzania	Tanzanian	Dodoma
United States of America (the) <sup>2</sup>	the United States of America	(of the) United States (of America), American	Washington, DC
Uruguay	the Eastern Republic of Uruguay	Uruguayan	Montevideo
Uzbekistan	the Republic of Uzbekistan	Uzbek	Tashkent
Vanuatu	the Republic of Vanuatu	of Vanuatu	Vila
Venezuela	the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Venezuelan	Caracas
Viet Nam	the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	Vietnamese	Hanoi
Yemen	the Republic of Yemen	Yemeni, a Yemenite	Sana'a
<i>Yugoslavia: see Serbia and Montenegro</i>			
<i>Zaire: see Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)</i>			
Zambia	the Republic of Zambia	Zambian	Lusaka
Zimbabwe	the Republic of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwean	Harare

<sup>1</sup> The full name should be used on title pages, in signatures and in recording nominations, elections and votes. Once the full name has been mentioned or where space is limited (as in a table for instance), the following shorter form may be used: the United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> Once the full name has been used or where space is limited (as in a table for instance), the following shorter forms may be used: the United States, USA.



## 9. Place names

(alphabetical list by English/approved names)

English/approved name	Local/other name
Abu Dhabi	Abu Zabi
Addis Ababa	Addis Abeba
Albania*	Shqipni, Shqipri, Shqipëri
Alexandria	Al-Iskandariyah
Algeria*	Algérie
Almaty	Alma-Ata
Antananarivo	Tananarivo
Antwerp	Antwerpen, Anvers
Athens	Athinai
Azerbaijan*	Azerbaidzhan
Baghdad	Bagdad
Bahrain*	Bahreïn
Bangkok	Krung Thep
Bangui	Bangi
Basel	Bâle, Basle
Beijing	Peking
Beirut	Bayrut, Beyrouth
Belarus*	Byelorussia, Belorussia
Belgrade	Beograd
Belize*	Belice
Berne	Bern
Bhutan*	Druk-yul
Bosnia & Herzegovina*	Bosna & Hercegovina
Brazil*	Brasil
Bruges	Brugge
Brunswick	Braunschweig
Brussels	Brussel, Bruxelles
Bucharest	Bucuresti
Bulgaria*	Bulgariya
Cairo	Al-Qahirah
Cambodia*	Kampuchea
Cameroon*	Cameroun
Chad*	Tchad
Chennai	Madras
Cologne	Köln
Conakry	Konakri

\* WHO Member States. For full, official names, see section 8.

English/approved name	Local/other name
Copenhagen	København
Corsica	Corse
Côte d'Ivoire*	Ivory Coast (the)
Cracow	Krakow, Kraków
Cyprus*	Kıbrıs, Kıpros
Damascus	Ash Sham, Damas, Dimash
Dar es Salaam	Daressalam
Dhaka	Dacca
Djibouti*	Jibuti
Doha	Ad-Dawahh, Biha
Estonia*	Eesti, Esthonia
Finland*	Suomi
Florence	Firenze
Gabon*	Gaboon, Gabun
Gdansk	Danzig
Geneva	Genève, Genf
Genoa	Genova
Ghana*	Gana
Ghent	Gand, Gent
Gothenburg	Göteborg
Guangzhou	Canton
Guinea*	Guinée(e)
Hague (The)	Den Haag, 's Gravenhage
Haifa	Kaiffa, Khaifa
Haiti*	Hàiti
Hanover	Hannover
Hanoi	Hanoï
Havana	Habana (La)
Helsinki	Helsingfors
Hungary*	Magyarország
Iceland*	Ísland
Iraq*	Irak
Ireland*	Eire
Jaffa	Yafa, Yafo
Jakarta	Djakarta
Kathmandu	Katmandu, Khatmandu
Kazakhstan*	Kazakstan
Kenya*	Kenia
Khartoum	Khartum
Kiev	Kiyev, Kiyiv, Kyiv
Kuwait*	Koweit, Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan*	Kirghizia, Kirgizia

\* WHO Member States. For full, official names, see section 8.

English/approved name	Local/other name
Latvia*	Latvija, Lettland
Lebanon*	Liban
Leghorn	Livorno
Liège	Luik
Lisbon	Lisboa
Ljubljana	Lyublyana
Louvain	Leuven
Luanda	Loanda
Lucerne	Luzern
Luxembourg*	Luxemburg
Luxor	Al-Aqsar, Al-Qusur, Al-Uqsor
Lvov	Lwów, Lviv
Lyon	Lyons
Manama	Al-Manamah
Mantua	Mantova
Marrakesh	Marakesh, Marrakech
Marseille	Marseille
Mauritania*	Mauritanie
Mauritius*	Ile Maurice
Mecca	Makkah, Mekka
Milan	Milano
Mogadishu	Mogadiscio, Mogadisho
Morocco*	Al-Maghribiyah, Al-Mamlakah
Moscow	Moskva
Mozambique*	Moçambique
Mumbai	Bombay
Munich	München
Muscat	Maskat, Masqat
Myanmar*	Burma
Naples	Napoli
N'Djamena	Fort-Lamy
Netherlands (the)*	Holland
Norway*	Norge
Nuremberg	Nürnberg
Ostend	Oostende, Ostende
Padua	Padova
Palau*	Belau, Belew
Phnom Penh	Pnompenh
Port Said	Bur Sa'id
Prague	Praha
Qatar*	Katar
Reykjavik	Reikjavik
Riyadh	Er Riad, Riad

\* WHO Member States. For full, official names, see section 8.

English/approved name	Local/other name
Romania*	Roumania, Rumania
Rome	Roma
Rwanda*	Ruanda
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	Saint Christopher and Nevis, St Kitts and Nevis
Salonica	Thessaloniki
Samarkand	Samarqand
Sana'a	Sanaa
Sao Tome*	Sao Thomé, Sao Tomé
Saragossa	Zaragoza
Sarajevo	Serajevo
Sardinia	Sardegna
Seoul	Kyongsong
Seville	Sevilla
Skopje	Skoplje
Sofia	Sofiya, Sophia
Sudan*	Soudan
Suriname*	Surinam
Sweden*	Sverige
Szczecin	Stettin
Tajikistan*	Tadzhikistan
Tallinn	Talin
Tbilisi	Tiflis
Tehran	Teheran
Thimphu	Tashi Chho Dzong, Thimbu
Tirana	Tiranë
Tunisia*	Tunisie
Turin	Torino
Turkey*	Türkiye
Ulaanbaatar	Ulan Bator
Valetta	Valetta
Venice	Venezia
Vienna	Wien
Viet Nam*	Vietnam, Viet-Nam
Vilnius	Vilna, Vilno, Wilna, Wilno
Warsaw	Warszawa
Wrocław	Breslau
Yangon	Rangoon
Yaoundé	Yaunde
Yerevan	Erevan, Erivan
Zagreb	Zágráb
Zurich	Zürich

\* WHO Member States. For full, official names, see section 8.

# 10. Useful reference books

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